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THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

MILTON KEYNES

School of Education

Thesis submitted for the Degree of:

Doctor of Philosophy

V621

Thesis Title:

A Study to Identify the Factors of Influence on
Headteachers When Considering Whether or not to
Include Sex Education in the Primary Curriculum

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Throughout the hours and days, the months and years this research has taken, my wife Dulcie has never ceased to give me her loving support and encouragement. She has been a Tower of Strength through the many ups and downs which are inevitable during periods of sustained research. She has motivated me, and made it possible for me to concentrate on the work, giving me the will to keep going..... in fact she has been my inspiration and it is in recognition of the fact that I could never have done this without her, that I dedicate the work to her.

Dulcie, this is for you.

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ABSTRACT

The study examines factors which influence primary heads' decisions whether or not to include sex education in the curriculum. This is done using a questionnaire of 83 statements based on factors thought likely to discriminate between heads who support sex education and those who do not. The questionnaire was developed using statements from a small group of primary heads who were asked whether or not they had sex education in their schools and their reasons for this. These statements together with others from the literature were examined and analysed, reduced from a pool of about 170 to the final 83, and presented to a larger group of heads in another area. Influences upon heads' sex education decision-making were identified from the responses to these statements.

The study was undertaken in 1990 in The North Kent Area where all 77 heads of all primary schools were invited to contribute. 54 heads did so, (response rate of 70.1%). 26 schools were junior, 28 were junior mixed and infant. 37 were county schools, 11 Church of England and 6 Roman Catholic. 31 schools included sex education, 21 did not and 2 gave no indication of status. 16 heads were women, 34 were men and 4 remained anonymous.

The main hypothesis is that heads are mainly influenced by a few factors from the whole possible range which are said to influence curriculum development, and these will be close to, or within the school, in terms of their strength of influence. These will include factors which are personal to the head, with others relating to the staff and school, parents and families and the head's perception of children's needs and development.

Two methods of analysis were applied to the data. The main method was by factor analysis, together with the use of cross-tabulation analysis. These methods combined to identify 33 statements in the questionnaire which discriminated between Sex Education and Non-Sex Education heads. The main hypothesis was supported, that heads were influenced by factors in or close to the school.

Heads regard themselves as occupying a significant position of influence over sex education decisions and expect theirs and the governors' decisions to be the same. Sex Education Heads were more consistent in responding as anticipated and displayed higher levels of agreement/disagreement with the statements than Non-Sex Education Heads. Non-Sex Education Heads displayed a higher degree of ambivalence and ambiguity in their responses. Sex Education Heads showed greater personal commitment to their position compared with Non-Sex Education Heads.

The 33 discriminating statements have been used to form a 'Sex Education Inventory' which could have various applications. It shows that many of the reasons for-against sex education in the literature have little influence on heads' decisions. It identifies those factors which are influential. It informs the sex education debate of the basic factors which need to be addressed to gain heads' support. It provides a means of determining where heads are on the for-against sex education continuum. It gives a sound starting point to those providing training, advice or support for the introduction, implementation and development of primary school sex education. The study provides a conceptual analysis of the factors which influence and shape sex education decisions

PREFACE

This study was planned and started in the early 1980s well before the present legislation regarding school management, the curriculum and the position of sex education in particular, at a time when, for all practical purposes the head had control and responsibility for the curriculum.

The original concept which motivated the study was that it was ultimately the head's decision whether or not to include sex education. Given the power of the head, and the controversial nature of primary school sex education, an investigation of what influenced heads' decisions, was considered important. No such study had previously been undertaken.

As the study progressed it was overtaken by various pieces of legislation which appeared to change the basis of the study. The Education (School Information) Regulations 1981 required the publication of a statement concerning the manner in which sex education was conducted in a school (if at all). This did not alter the legal circumstances of the head but it did emphasise sex education as a subject to be dealt with in a manner unique to this topic alone.

The Education (No.2) Act 1986, gave governors, in consultation with the head, responsibility to decide if, and what sex education should be given.

The Education Reform Act 1988 established the National Curriculum.

Although sex education was not part of the National Curriculum, as a discrete subject, aspects of it were included in some of the Science Attainment Targets, which have since been revised.

The Education Act 1993 made sex education compulsory, in secondary schools, but not in primary schools and gave the right to all parents to withdraw their children from all or some sex education lessons if they wished (other than that contained in the National Curriculum). Alterations were made to content of the sex education elements in the National Curriculum so that it dealt only with the biological aspects of human sexual development. The position in primary schools remained largely as it was before the 1993 Act. The head had an important role in advising, informing and consulting with the governors over the preparation, review and updating of any sex education policy.

The Education (School Information) (England) Regulations 1994 required a summary of the content and organisation of sex education to be included in published information.

The legal structure has been altered, but in practical terms the position remains largely unchanged. The introduction of the governors' responsibility could be seen as one more factor of influence upon the head.

My belief is that heads are still pre-eminently influential in 'advising or informing' the governors and it is probably within their sphere of influence to see that decisions made in the governors' name are the same as their own, particularly as heads expect the governors' decisions regarding sex education to be the same as theirs. For these reasons the study was not radically revised following the changes in law. Circumstances have changed, the practicalities have not. I contend it is still the head who retains significant power and influence in this matter and is probably the

most important single individual in influencing whether or not sex education is provided in the primary school.

Much of the background material in the study refers to the position before the 1986 Act and by the time the questionnaire was circulated to heads in early 1990 the legal requirements of the 1986 Act were still very unclear to many heads and governors. Even in 1992 it was reported that probably a third of all school governing bodies were in contravention of the 1986 Act by still not having a written sex education policy document.

Throughout the study, reference is made where appropriate to the current situation. Many of the earlier factors relating to sex education still feature in the on-going debate. The study does not present reasons for and against sex education, from the literature to headteachers and seek their opinions of them regarding whether or not to include sex education in the primary school. Reasons given by heads themselves are used as a basis for the questionnaire statements used in this study.

The review of the literature creates the context in which heads' responses can be examined and the reasons which influence their decisions identified. The context provided by the literature is both historical and conceptual illustrating the wide range of factors which have been identified and the role and responsibility of the head in regard to curriculum matters. Compared with the wide range of influences identified in the literature it is expected that heads' reasons for-against sex education will be more parochial and concerned with the practicalities and personalities in or close to the school, including their own personal reasons.

INTRODUCTION : THE CURRICULUM

The curriculum is influenced by a variety of factors and those which initially shaped it and are used to explain its present form are liable to change. The mechanisms and strategies of change have been examined and a wide network of factors identified. Chin (1968) grouped planned strategies for change into three broad categories:

1. Power - Coercive: Change imposed from a higher power base often administratively expedient but educationally unsound.
2. Normative - Re-educative: Change by means of problem solving methods or attitude changing techniques.
3. Empirical - Rational: Factors which stimulate change by linking innovative processes with research and development.

These categories are very similar to those referred to by Golby (1983), when explaining that changes can be:

1. Dictatorial.... and brought about through the mechanisms of a power structure.
2. Evolved Consensus.... being the concensus of innovation of a network of individuals bound together in a social group centred upon an LEA.
3. Theory Led.... based upon ideas, concepts and findings of researchers, academics etc.

Any change is a complex process of negotiation between interest groups (Golby 1983) and need not necessarily be explained as deriving from only one of the models reported above. Change will often be a complicated fusion of some if not all, features of these models (Clift 1983). Whether

the major forces are outside the school (Richmond 1971) crisis driven (Hooper 1971) or not, innovation is seen to depend on the creativity of individuals within a social and administrative system that supports and legitimises them (Golby 1983). The process of change, while explained in terms of factors which promote it can also be considered in terms of factors which inhibit it such as the forces of inertia (Richmond 1971); whether the topic is controversial (Humble and Rudduck 1972); autonomy at all levels and different value positions which mobilise their own forces of resistance (MacDonald and Rudduck 1971).

MODELS OF THE CURRICULUM

Models of the influences which affect the design of the curriculum differ. Tyler (1949) proposed that the objectives for the curriculum were derived from the learners, contemporary life, subject specialists, philosophy and psychology. Broudy et al. (1964) proposed a model in which the curriculum objectives were determined by the demands of the culture, uses of knowledge and the psychological aspects of teaching and learning.

Kerr (1968) developed a very complex model for curriculum theory, the essence of which was '...that everything influences everything else'. He simplified the derivation of objectives by maintaining the three sources were; pupils' developmental levels, needs and interests; social conditions and problems which the children are likely to encounter and the nature of the subject matter and types of learning which can arise from its study. The range of influences upon the curriculum include, societal factors, pupil-teacher relationships, school-community influences, the body of knowledge, children's individual differences and 'readiness'. What to

include in the curriculum is a result of the interaction of these factors.

Lawton (1979) proposed the view that curriculum content was influenced by philosophical ideas regarding the structure and organisation of knowledge, the sociology of knowledge, psychological factors, that curriculum provision must take account of the social background, abilities and interests of the child and that the teacher's role was defined by society.

WHAT KNOWLEDGE TO INCLUDE ON THE CURRICULUM

Certain areas of knowledge are well established 'traditional' features of school curricula in this country (e.g. Maths, Reading and Writing skills, Physical Education). Change in these areas will focus on the methods of teaching and content, rather than whether to include or exclude them.

These well-established 'traditional' areas of the curriculum are generally thought of as being 'non-controversial'. Other areas of the curriculum have been perceived as controversial. Sex education is often seen in this light (Gamage 1989; Went 1989; Trudell 1993; Green 1994; Went 1994; H.E.A. 1995; Reiss 1995; Haywood 1996). One reason for including controversial issues on the curriculum, is the very fact of their controversiality.

Richmond (1971) referring to the Schools Council's Humanity Curriculum Project said:

" The assumption is that the very fact of their being controversial -- issues for which no universally accepted solution has been found -- warrants their being aired in the classroom."

(Richmond 1971).

It is possible that criteria applied to changes in non-controversial areas will differ from those applied to controversial ones. It is probable that the level of consistency in applying the 'usual' criteria has a direct

relationship with the perceived degree of controversiality of the topic by those responsible for change. In the case of a primary school the head occupies a very influential position for managing change.

DEVELOPMENT OF A THEORY OF THE CURRICULUM

Innovation in the curriculum needs to be part of a process firmly anchored in a bed of curriculum theory. Up to the mid 1960s no coherent theory had been developed. Those changes that had taken place in the curriculum before then had not resulted from any theoretical framework since none existed. An overall approach to curriculum development summarised from the O.E.C.D. publication (1966) had the notion of a core curriculum embodied in it. The debate concerning the ideas for a core curriculum were continued in James Callaghan's Ruskin College speech (1976), and fuelled the arguments for a core curriculum based on the assumption that some subjects are basic and others, optional extras. These ideas have continued to develop and since 1988 have resulted in the adoption (with subsequent revisions) of the National Curriculum which determines much of what is taught in British schools. Some areas of the curriculum are still determined locally, and this currently includes most of the content of primary school sex education (where it exists).

The continual growth of knowledge affects curriculum decisions (Kerr 1968) and with the 'explosion of information' it is not possible to learn everything so criteria are needed to enable those responsible to decide what to include on the curriculum (Richmond 1971). The problem is largely a philosophical one (Lawton 1979).

How this selection is made will depend on the personal, professional, philosophical and practical attitudes and opinions of those empowered to implement; their perceptions of the nature of education, the child and the society with which their system is interacting. Anyone undertaking curriculum change today is not working on a clean slate. The constraints and influences of what is already in place will exert considerable pressure to maintain the status quo. The pressure of society, balancing the interests of a myriad of interlinked groups (governors, staff, pupils, parents, LEA, Government regulations etc.), deciding priorities in relation to available finance and so on, are all the kind of factors which need careful consideration and which will influence the decisions that are made.

FACTORS OF INFLUENCE

Whatever philosophical approach the innovator has regarding the nature of the curriculum, any decisions made will be influenced by the many factors which come from the cultural milieu in which the educational process is taking place. As I see it, factors which influence change come from a complicated network of Sources of Influence, plotted around the school, at various distances to it, according to their 'administrative' force. The sources of pressure to promote or inhibit change come from; society, its structures, communication networks, values, mores and traditions; from commercial, media, industrial, political and institutional factors at national level; from local government, associations and interest groups; from neighbourhood and local community structures, and the range of factors which reside in or close to the school. The model of Influence which I propose, may be best illustrated by a series of concentric circles, with 'The Decision-Making Process' at the centre. The 'Factors of Influence',

in their various categories (1. General Societal Factors, 2. Institutional and Organisational Factors at National level, 3. Influences at County level, 4. Local Community Influences, 5. Influences within the School) encircle this process, at different distances from it. I contend that the 'further away' a factor is placed from the decision-making process, the weaker it is in influencing the decisions that are made and the 'closer' the factor is to the process, the 'stronger' its level of Influence.

In detailing the examples I have chosen, I propose moving from the perimeter (weaker) to the centre (stronger) as I perceive it. The notions of 'distance' and 'force' attaching to the influence flow from the interpretation of the implementer in response to the influences in play and the effect they therefore have on the decision-making process.

This study examines those factors which may influence headteachers' decisions about including sex education in the primary school curriculum. The focus is on the headteacher because of the influential position s/he occupies in managing change within the primary school. I think many of the influences which are said to affect curriculum decisions have little influence on sex education decisions and therefore it is important to determine what factors are influential in order to clarify, inform and address those strategies aimed at introducing and developing sex education in the primary school.

INTRODUCTION: THE LITERATURE REVIEW

THE CONCEPT OF INFLUENCE:

Influence is the power of producing an effect, or the effect of the power exerted. In the case of this study it is any power which has some effect in shaping primary heads' decisions about sex education. Influence can be direct or indirect, open or hidden and what is said to influence heads or might be thought to influence them, forms a body of concepts comprising a wide range of factors. Any influence, whether from a serious academic source, or simply a strong personal factor should be given serious consideration if it can be shown to have had an effect on a head's decision-making about sex education. Because these influences can run from the profound to the mundane it is necessary to be as original and imaginative as possible in identifying them and classifying them in terms of the strength with which they influence decisions and whether they discriminate between heads who oppose sex education and those who support it. Those very influential and discriminating factors might then be used as a basis for considering ways of approaching the current sex education debate.

THE PURPOSE OF THE LITERATURE SURVEY:

The purpose of the literature survey is to present the wide array of issues which could influence primary heads' decisions. These potential influences, both for and against sex education, form a comprehensive set against which to consider heads' responses regarding their sex education decisions.

The concepts come from a wide variety of sources, such as: educational and sociological research, work on the theory of curriculum management and

development, published sex education materials, professional papers and articles by acknowledged experts regarding sex education in primary schools, Government and official reports, publications about legal and developmental concerns. Material is also presented from more popular sources; media coverage, articles in the educational press, quality and tabloid newspapers and magazines, television programmes and anecdotal items. Some would be considered academically profound and others less serious, even lighthearted, but the purpose of this study is to report those factors which do influence primary heads' sex education decisions compared with those which have the potential to do so but which, for a variety of reasons are not as influential.

The head who says she has sex education as part of the curriculum because she does not want children growing up as ignorant as she was, is representing a factor equally as important as one who says that he does not have any because he is personally opposed to sex education in the primary school. Similarly a head who justifies the non sex education status of her school with claims of the latency period in children's development is to be regarded as seriously as one who bases his development of the topic on the grounds of children's developmental needs, supportive parental attitudes and the social good that will derive from it. Factors which clearly discriminate between sex educating and non sex educating heads are to be taken seriously, whether they appear to be academically profound or not.

THE ARRAY OF ISSUES RAISED:

Issues come from a wide variety of categories, for example; from society, cultural considerations, mass media influence, the local community,

academic and institutional structures, the nature of the primary school and the roles of those within it. It is only from an examination of this wide range of issues that the reader can see the enormous potential influence there is on sex education decisions, and then be brought to a realisation through the empirical research that those factors which strongly influence heads' decisions, and discriminate between them come from a very small proportion of the entire range.

An idea of the sort of issues reviewed is given below:

Questions of how society affects the school system and whether it benefits or suffers from the introduction of sex education; ambivalent attitudes and double standards in sexual matters; religious and cultural pressures; the treatment of sex by the media; lay pressure groups and community influence, are considered. Consideration is given to the effect of: hierarchical structures and systems of control in the educational establishment; the expectation of roles, styles of management, expansion of knowledge, impact of academic research and debate, and the political goals and legal parameters of the system. The dynamics of the school community, the nature of primary education and what fits the primary curriculum, children's development and needs, adult attitudes towards sex education and the implications of legal and pedagogic conditions are also included. Issues pertaining to the status or role of the head; her/his pre-eminence as the most influential and powerful individual in the school and their roles in, managing change and development, understanding child development are considered, together with their personal attitudes or beliefs, perception of others' attitudes, concern to avoid conflict, knowledge of family and community and so on. Questions of the definition

of sex education, arguments for and against it, the age to start, who is responsible and where it should take place, its aims and outcomes are also examined.

These issues define the kind of factors which could influence sex education decisions and many have featured in the sex education debate, in a recurring way over many decades. This adds an historical perspective to the review.

THE USE OF THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:

An historical perspective reveals that many of the issues currently under discussion have appeared before in the sex education debate. For example questions about: whether young children need sex education; their interest in sex or whether they talk about it and ask questions; should they be taught about pubertal changes and do they understand sex matters; will it destroy children's innocence, have frequently been asked. Another recurring issue concerns who should be responsible for children's sex education, if parents, do they fulfil their responsibility or if the school, then who should teach it? Would teachers need special training? What information should be included? Would it encourage sexual activity? What about the moral content? Reference to material going back to the 1930s and 1940s or earlier, provides evidence of the continuity of the sex education debate over many years and the lack of progress made. Over the years, the sex education debate has reflected a classic spiral form in which many common themes have been visited and re-visited. In spite of the on-going discussion the acceptance of sex education as a natural and suitable element in the primary curriculum has still not been secured.

While common issues in the sex education debate have appeared regularly in the past it is important to bear in mind that they would not have shared exactly the same meanings over the passage of time. For example, the approach to the conceptualisation of such issues as childrens' sexual needs, interests, behaviour and knowledge; who should be responsible for sex education and where should it take place; the age at which it should begin; curriculum content, materials and methods; training teachers for sex education; social attitudes towards sexual intercourse, masturbation, homosexuality, contraception, marriage, preparation for puberty, personal relationships and so on, in the 1930s, 1950s and 1970s would have depended on the values, attitudes and perceptions current at the time and therefore, differ from those which prevail now. Yet the on-going debate has not moved very far forward.

So in the literature review the reader is presented with a wide spectrum of potential influences ranging from the general to the very specific, across many factor categories. This range of potential influence is shown to extend through the historical dimension retaining major elements in its present composition. It is against this model of an ever spiralling sex education debate, that the empirical work is set. It aims to focus upon those factors which strongly influence sex education decisions and discriminate between sex education and non-sex education heads, in order to consider from an entirely fresh viewpoint possible ways and means of moving the debate forward.

CHAPTER 1. INFLUENCES OF FACTORS OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL ON SEX EDUCATION

1.1 INFLUENCES FROM SOCIETY

Schools are set in society, reflect the society they serve (Dale 1968) and cannot be separated from it. Changes in either one will affect the other (Bruner 1960; Hansen and Jensen 1971; Mackenzie 1981; Gammage 1989).

Changes and differences in society must be taken into account in developing effective sex education (Kirkendall and Miles 1968; King 1973; S.E.F. 1990; Concern 1994). Eppel and Eppel (1966) reported the perception that more emphasis was being placed on sexual matters in society, a trend which has continued and increased (Gillham 1997). In a general social environment where rational attitudes towards sex prevail, sex education can proceed (Bjork 1972). Public support for sex education has tended to be stronger in the younger levels of the adult population (Reports on Government Public Enquiries [S.O.U] 1969; Fidge 1978; H.P.A.N.I. 1996).

Ford and Beach (1951) classified societies into three categories, restrictive, semi-restrictive and permissive and characterised Western society as restrictive with the general result that negative attitudes towards sex information were more common (e.g. see Seymour-Smith 1975; Goldman and Goldman 1988; Scott and Thomson 1992) and still persist. Farrell (1978) found that attitudes of Victorian morality were reflected in parental responses in her study, though earlier, Brewer (1962), referring to correspondence from 1850, and Kilvert's diary in 1872, suggested that Victorian attitudes were often very broadminded. There is considerable ambiguity in a society which seems saturated with matters of sex, but where taboos on infant, child and adolescent sexuality lead to problems in adult life (Masters and Johnson 1968; Hadad 1986; Bridgeman 1996), and presumably

need addressing through appropriate sex education. The introduction of sex education could prove difficult, as Goldman and Goldman (1982) found that Western cultures still maintain a public conspiracy against the acquisition of sexual knowledge. There is a need for sociologists to demonstrate and define the social nature of sexuality while remaining sensitive to the boundaries imposed by biology and psychology (Gagnon and Simon 1973; Plummer 1975; Gillham 1997). This would illuminate discussions as to whether sexuality is a basic instinctive biological force, shaped by the social process or whether it is initially shaped by the social meanings attributed to it (Farrell 1978). It has been suggested that attitudes to sex may change because sexual behaviour changes, although the reverse influence could also be true (Osofsky 1971).

A variety of factors has brought about changes in attitudes in certain areas of sex (Illsley and Taylor 1974) which tends to support the earlier finding by Robinson et al (1968) that society has fewer rights concerning individual sexual behaviour than hitherto. Attitudes vary considerably within society, and they are seen to influence the provision of sex education (Wells-Pestell 1976; Meredith 1989). Speaking at a teachers' conference regarding the need to introduce sex education to counterbalance the influences upon children from society around them, Johnson (1979) said,

' Children are not divorced from society at large.
Suppose we do nothing....What effect are the messages
that are coming through from society likely to have ?'

The need for Heads (and teachers) to study the impact of social problems on children has long been identified (Plowden Report 1967; Raggatt 1983; Gammage 1989). Sexual stimuli affecting young people are increasingly present in modern society, decreasing children's sexual inhibitions and

increasing their sexual awareness (Moss 1965; Went 1989). There has been considerable support for the need to recognise the problems children experience growing up in our society (Lawton 1978), even though all societies attempt to influence or control the sexual development of the young and provide rules for acceptable sexual conduct, laid down with varying degrees of anxiety by teachers and parents (British Council of Churches 1966; Gillham 1997). Attempts to influence and control children's sexual development, conflict with the '...messages coming through from society,' and generate the double standards currently evident (Massey 1990).

Ambivalent attitudes towards pre-marital sex (Reiss 1970, I.P.P.F. 1975) among adults, compared with young people's increasingly liberal attitudes to and experience of, pre-marital sex (Schofield 1964; Farrell 1978; Johnson et al 1994), reflect the problematic nature of the issues involved in addressing children's sex education. Issues like:

- a) The connection between teenage pregnancies, poverty and racial discrimination (Gordan 1979).
- b) Consideration of the lowering of the age of consent (Farrell 1978) and for male homosexuals (Criminal Justice Bill 1994).
- c) Changes in attitudes towards masturbation (Stone 1977), homosexuality (Schur 1965; Alyson 1980), sexual abuse (Elliott 1989).

are all factors to be considered in deciding what to do about children's sexual education. Internationally threatening factors such as the nuclear threat were seen as capable of affecting sexual attitudes (London County Council 1964), and one might expect similar attitudes to continue due to HIV/AIDS etc (A.F.Y. 1992; Went 1994; DfEE 1996). Additionally, the question of how to prepare children for adolescence, is a matter which will be affected also by perceptions about the nature of adolescence. In the

early 1960s the stereotype was in terms of violence and sex (Carstairs 1962), and the general notion of adolescence as a social problem, is by no means a recent invention.

"The idea that adolescence only became a social problem in the 19th. century is sheer historical fantasy."

(Stone 1977).

The teacher's influence, is seen as being very limited compared to that of society's pressures (Honey 1978). Wang (1977) saw health policy and health education as being interwoven into the fabric of society, each affecting the other. Social goals are set by human need, technology and ideology. As a society evolves, new goals emerge reflecting the values, beliefs and ideals of that society in relation to human needs. Health and social goals should combine to establish a health policy consistent with these goals (Newell 1975; U.S. Department of Health Education and Welfare 1975), so that health education programmes inform decision-making across social groups to meet society's needs (Ray and Went 1995). Social norms make teaching beyond the 'facts of life', necessary, to be of real relevance to people's needs (Little 1970).

Societal factors like, the increased levels of sexuality in society; the impact of social problems on children; issues of teenage sex; concerns about HIV/AIDS; adult ambivalence in sexual matters and the social control of children's sexuality suggest certain issues which could influence heads' decisions whether or not to provide sex education.

1.2 CULTURE

Cultural factors affect the moral and emotional development of children which like intellectual development, follows a regular sequence based on the interaction between maturation and biological factors on the one hand and experience and learning within a cultural setting on the other (C.A.C.E 1967). Changing cultural circumstances, like the greater openness about sex, changing sex roles and so on, have combined to topple insular views of the nature of sex education as being a relatively simple matter of imparting specific facts and support the view of the importance of the psychosocial dimension which sees sexual expression and development as being influenced by personality, environmental and cultural factors (Reiss 1960; Kirkendall 1964; Bell 1966; Kirkendall 1968; Gammage 1989; Ray and Went 1995)).

Cross cultural studies have shown the variety of sexual development, understanding and behaviour arising from cultural influences, some of which might be said to encourage sex education and others to inhibit it (Christensen 1966; Reiss 1967; Goldman and Goldman 1982, 1988). Learning about sex is seen as part of a total cultural pattern, with cultural factors within that social milieu, affecting behaviour (Farrell 1978; Goldman and Goldman 1982; Lenderyou and Porter 1993; Concern 1994).

Changes in the socio-cultural aspects of society were seen to affect sexual development and the transition from a very conservative culture to one where notions of sexual equality were being established was found to facilitate the way for sex education development (Kang 1970; Green 1994).

Sex education has to take cultural considerations into account, and within a multi-cultural society, the width of cultural norms must be addressed (Wadia 1970; Elles 1976; Massey 1995). The whole community would need to be consulted in setting up a programme (Burke 1970), with the educators being aware of the differences in information and experience between ethnic groups and sub-groups within the community (Elias and Gebhard 1969; D.F.E 1994). Some communities have strong views against sex education (Wells-Pestell 1976) and many cultures discourage certain behaviours (e.g. nudity, masturbation and so on) (Goldman and Goldman 1982 and 1988; Thomson 1993).

The International Planned Parenthood Federation identified the need for a balanced national programme of sex education in all countries for the guidance and development of young people (Burke 1970), and implied that sex education can be introduced into all cultures but pointed out that in some, the word "sex" could be highly controversial. Children's sexual thinking is influenced by culture (Goldman and Goldman 1982), and implementing sex education in the U.K. would need to be started well before puberty if the deep-rooted cultural problem of experiencing difficulties in speaking about sexual topics, is to be overcome (Ashton 1982).

In developing sex education, the need to take cultural considerations into account, particularly in our multi-cultural society, is likely to have an influence on heads' decisions.

1.3 RELIGION

There are many factors arising from the nature of religious thought and influence which make it likely that these will have some effect on, sex education decisions. How far these factors may support or inhibit the provision of sex education, is considered in this section. All major religions have something to say about human sexuality (Reiss 1995).

The moral and sexual domains overlap and the terms 'moral' and 'sexual' are assumed as almost synonymous; religious groups often treat religious and sexual morality as intertwined, with the religious factor strongly influencing both (Goldman and Goldman 1982; Phillips and Fine 1992).

There is a connection between religious belief and behaviour, in terms of both general conduct and sexual behaviour (Rigby 1962; Farrell 1978; Reiss 1995). Christian sexual morality is based on concern for others, not on prohibitions or the desire to limit personal freedom (Honey 1978).

Religious values often form the basis for moral and sexual judgements (Goldman and Goldman 1982).

Questions about the relationship of religion and sex teaching, and whether 'sound sex education' was compatible with religious belief were being considered in the 1930s (Wright 1932; Chance 1935). Support from the church for teaching about sex (at home) is implied in the reference in a pastoral letter, to the lamentable decline in family education due to the fact that parents shirk their sex education responsibilities (The English Bishops 1944). Sex teaching as an aspect of religious education was an area seen as appropriate and obvious (London County Council 1964).

Masters and Johnson (1968) said sex education should be taught in church (as well as the home and school).

The linking of sex education with a Christian dimension was apparent during a debate in the House of Lords when it was urged that priests (among others) should tell children about sex, in the context of right and wrong, and that sex education should be given within the context of Christianity and marriage (Suddley 1976; Mockton 1976).

Church schools, where the development of the whole child was important, were reminded to stress the concept that religious faith permeated every part of life, and show the relationship of the Faith to all subjects taught in school, including sex instruction (Hoffman 1979; Lounden and Urwin 1992). In a report by the Department of Education and Science (1975) a head's view that the 'religious side of sex education was more important than the biological side' was seen as a valid point to consider.

Honey (1978) maintained that the moral implications of sex education were of particular concern to Christian teachers. He saw this concern developing a particular form of Christian sex education based on similar aims and objectives to non-Christian or secular sex education. While the two styles might share many common aims and concerns, Honey saw the influence of religion as producing a substantially different outcome. Earlier, the need to link sex education with living faith, reverence and Christian virtues was seen as imperative for its success (Gagern 1953).

Where religious sex education is not specifically envisaged, religious organisations and churches in the community should be consulted during the development of sex education programmes (Burke 1970; Elles 1976; Goldman and Goldman 1982). Where compulsory sex education forms the provision in any system, a judgement reached in December 1976, found that such provision did not breach the European Convention on Human Rights, and there would be no objection if religious convictions had been taken into account (Education 1977; Harris 1996a).

Religious faiths can influence the provision of sex education by being involved in debating the issues (Islamic Academy 1991), by calling for it to be provided in the community in which they serve, or by providing it directly as part of their responsibility (Jalani 1970).

" Certainly the churches have underlined their position on sex education in a recent statement, published jointly by the United States Catholic Conference, the Synagogue Council of America and the National Council of Churches, that, the development of sound moral values about sexual behavior, as with any other behavior, can only come from the honesty and integrity with which adults present the facts to the young."
(Calderone 1968).

The British Council of Churches (1966), called for more adequate sex education programmes for the young in school, for teachers' courses leading to a recognised qualification, and help for parents as partners in this enterprise. Church officials have been urged to endorse and participate in the process of providing sex education (Gagern 1953; BCC 1966; Edwards 1967; Yarber 1979). Church involvement, evident in publications (Church of England Board of Education 1964; Prince and Prince 1974; Huggett 1986; C.E.S. 1994; Lankshear 1995), linked organisations (Catholic Advisory

Marriage Council 1973), hierarchical promulgations (Second Vatican Council, quoted in CMAC 1973; Rochester Diocesan Board of Education 1986), inter-faith initiatives (Lenderyou and Porter 1994) and social/practical work with the young (Quinn 1966; Church Army 1982; A.F.Y. 1995), all reflect religious involvement in sex education.

" In this respect of sex education in our schools, religious influences whether Christian, Jewish or perhaps those other faiths in which sex morality is basic, must play a vital part."
(Stamp 1976)

Historically, many church leaders at the turn of the last century were recommending dangerously unsuitable and unsound books to young people for their sex instruction, and it was reported that an enormous sense of guilt developed in boys from the kind of religious bombardment they received through their colleges and public school chapels in the mid to late 19th. century (Brewer 1962). While it could be argued that there were good reasons to teach Christian morality, there were difficulties in determining Biblical, or other religious attitudes to contentious issues such as: abortion, homosexuality, masturbation, divorce, contraception and so on (Harris 1968; Honey 1978; Vickerman 1992; Williams and Hutchinson 1993; C.E.S. 1994; Reiss 1995).

Church representatives have expressed the view that premature sex education brings about moral deterioration (Bjork 1972), or reflected the perception of traditional church attitudes to sex instruction (e.g. Education for Chastity 1996) as being, 'the facts of life when necessary and only as far as necessary, and training in modesty and purity.' (Pickering 1965). The

church was seen to be failing young people in matters of sex education, as were the home and school (Kimborough 1966).

Religious opposition to sex education tends, in fact to be opposition to a type of sex education which any particular group judges to be inferior to theirs, or which is given by an institution which, in their terms, does not possess the appropriate authority. Drake (1968) opposed state sex education as it intruded on church responsibility, drove a wedge between the family and the church, undermined traditional morals and was in league with evil influences. An Archdeacon of Chesterfield expressed his serious doubts whether sex education did not do more harm than good (Dilworth-Harris 1960).

Secular education authorities' sex education programmes were criticised for being 'far too specific.' (Pickering 1965), 'non-moral' sex education has been widely questioned by Christian groups and opposition from non-Christian faiths has been reported (Nazer 1970; Boethius 1976; Farrag 1976). In some cases the sex education developed by religious denominations has been seen to be 'contaminated' by secular trends (Atkin 1995; McQuaid 1996).

It has been observed that much opposition to sex education from religious denominations is marked by low levels of logical argument (Fraser 1972; Goldman and Goldman 1982), but even where opposition is covert, a certain negative attitude to sex and sexuality has been evident. Religious affiliation was found to exert the strongest influence on an individual's sex education attitudes (Segal 1962; Thomas 1979) and religious influences

on heads, have been identified (Manzer 1970). Religious pressures made for a more inhibited and controversial situation for sex education in schools (Goldman and Goldman 1982).

" In our religious tradition the essence of morality has sometimes appeared to consist of sexual restraint."
(Carstairs 1962).

"The move away from organised religion, especially Christianity and the decline in the power of the church, with subsequent moves away from religious values to more rationalist, materialistic, secular ways of thinking, has led to the growth of 'rationality', making pupils more likely to question authority and demand explanations.... Such pressure has important implications for...planning the curriculum."

(Lawton 1978).

Religion has an influence on the whole educational system not only through moral values and the way in which religious principles form a basis of law and culture, behaviour, social norms and attitudes but also in the practical involvement of many religious faiths and denominations in the educational system.

Religious concern in matters of societal needs (Francis 1984) and the church's response to the needs of the multi-cultural society (Church of England General Synod 1984), for example, show an awareness of a range of concerns. Some religious factors will have negative influences on sex education, but there are other examples of positive support for it from other religious sources. It is quite probable that religious factors will exercise some degree of influence on heads' decisions, and it will be informative to see if these are generally supportive or not.

1.4 SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

There is a large body of literature regarding the effect of socio-economic factors on a wide range of human development, language, attitudes, education, physical growth and so on. Social class influences sexual development and behaviour (Smith 1993) and could be an important factor in deciding whether or not to implement sex education.

In teaching 'hygiene' to girls of seven to fourteen in about 1923 the teacher responsible said:

" I recognised that these lessons were not merely a new subject in the curriculum, but that they were definitely needed by the children as a practical aid to a healthier and happier mode of living."
(Dawe 1935)

Subsequently because of the sexual conduct of some of the older girls, Dawe (1935) decided to address the matter of their sexual development, and so embarked upon, what she called her 'experiment in sex education.' The poor background of these pupils was seen as reason for their ignorance and attitudes. The common stereotype of the lower class home, with a free and easy attitude towards sex was found to be unsupported; a tendency to be conservative about sex was more the case (Dawe 1935; Schofield 1965). Significant differences in attitudes to all aspects of sexuality were attributed to social-class differences. At the upper end of the scale, a happy healthy attitude was said to exist, which was reflected in the belief that children's curiosity should be satisfied by answering questions truthfully, frankly and openly whenever they were put. At the other end of the scale:

"...the contrasting philosophy is that sexual curiosity is suspect, sexual information dangerous and perhaps frightening for the young child and both must be controlled by being suppressed."

(Newson and Newson 1968).

The opposing philosophies of 'satisfying children's curiosity in an open, frank, manner', on the one hand, and 'suppressing suspect, dangerous, even frightening information', on the other (Goldman and Goldman 1988; Massey 1990) could well affect the outcome of considering implementing sex education in a school or area where either of these philosophies predominated.

Attitudes to specific topics, such as nudity, openness of sex-talk within the family, and sexual behaviour are affected by social class (Elias and Gebhard 1969; Fidge 1978a; Simms and Smith 1989; Johnson et al 1994).

Children's attitudes, as to whether they found sex education in the junior school helpful or not, indicated a greater awareness of helpful outcomes from children of non-manual families. Of those children who were not receiving any sex education, a larger percentage of manual workers' children said they would like it (Fidge 1978a). No differences were apparent however, on a social-class basis, within the majority of parents who agreed that sex education was beneficial (Fidge 1978).

In matters relating to the school and teachers, educators were advised to be aware of the differences in information and experience due to socio-economic factors (Elias and Gebhard 1969; B.M.A. 1997). A large measure of agreement was found to exist across class barriers with the opinion that the ideal providers of sex education were both the parents and school in a

cooperative combination (Fidge 1978). Middle-class parents showed more interest in resources used for sex education (Gill et al 1971).

Teachers in working-class districts had a wider view of their role compared to the restricted view of teachers in middle-class districts (Musgrove and Taylor 1965). Hargreaves (1967) suggested that working-class children were alienated from school, and because of language/class differences, Bernstein (1971), argued that children were less likely to relate to teachers who were middle-class, and who spoke and acted in ways outside the experience of the working-class child. These class influences could affect the impact of any sex education offered at school, and result in some children getting less from it (Farley 1987). This in turn raises questions of whether the school is able to compensate for inadequate or reluctant working-class parents who fail to discuss sex matters with their children (Farrell 1978; Tones 1987). In fact most working-class parents said they found sex education in the junior school helpful, but a higher percentage of middle-class parents were more strongly in agreement with it being provided in school (Fidge 1978).

People from the lower socio-economic classes find it difficult to talk about sex (Hoggart 1957; Rainwater 1960; Wake 1966; Newson and Newson 1968; Farrell 1978), whereas those from the upper-classes communicate more fully on sex matters with their children (Elias and Gebhard 1969; Fidge 1978). Middle-class mothers are more likely to tell their daughters about sex (Schofield 1965), and middle-class parents generally are more likely to think that they should talk to their children and answer questions (Farrell 1978). A larger percentage of middle-class

children are said, by their parents, to be frequently asking questions, as opposed to working-class children (Fidge 1978). This seems to be supported by proportionately more middle-class children reporting that it was easier to communicate with their parents on sex matters, than did working-class children (Fidge 1978a).

Early examples of class affecting sexual knowledge are cited in Brewer (1962) when the increasing class consciousness of the middle-classes in the late nineteenth century gradually brought about the separation of the children of these families from the information and folk lore shared by other children. Rainwater (1960) suggested that the lower socio-economic classes were very ignorant of their own physiology. Social class was seen as a significant factor in the source of children's sexual knowledge with most children from blue collar families getting their information from peers, while children from white collar families got it mostly from their mothers (Schofield 1965; Elias and Gebhard 1969). By 1973, however, it was reported that neither the actual, nor preferred source of information seemed to be related to social class (Schofield 1973).

In learning about some aspects of sex, working-class girls appeared to learn more at school than home, whereas with boys, no significant class difference was apparent (Farrell 1978). Upper-class children also appeared to learn sex information at an earlier age than working-class children (Farrell 1978). As far as children's interest in finding out sex information at junior school age was concerned, an average of 75%, across all social class barriers, reported such an interest (Fidge 1978a).

Accurate information was more likely to be given by middle-class parents to their children since they were found to give more truthful answers to children's questions (Fidge 1978).

While Schofield (1965) reported that middle-class girls might begin their periods earlier, Farrell (1978) found no class differences in the age periods started. Secondary modern boys and girls (and, by inference, from working-class families), were said to pair off earlier than grammar school pupils (Rigby 1962). Elias and Gebhard (1969) found no significant or consistent correlation between socio-sexual activity of children and parental social/occupational class. Working-class children are reported to be more sexually experienced than middle-class (Kanter and Zelnik 1972b; Venner 1972; Farrell 1978). Schofield (1965), suggested that middle-class boys might be engaging in sexual intercourse earlier than working-class boys, whereas elsewhere it was found that most teenagers with gonorrhoea, most frequently came from broken homes, poor family backgrounds, with less general or sex, education (Braestrup 1970). Similarly many teenage pregnancies were reported from girls from deprived, socially disadvantaged circumstances (Gillham 1997).

Teachers should be aware of the differences which exist in sexual matters between different occupational and socio-economic groups (Elias and Gebhard 1969; B.M.A. 1997) and the problems of the issue of class bias in health education resources (Coombs and Craft 1987). There is a wide range of social, class and environmental factors which affect all areas of children's development (Coombs and Craft 1987; Tomes 1987; Gillham 1997) which could influence the provision of sex education.

1.5 MASS MEDIA

The mass media has a very pervasive influence on modern society. Through television, radio, newspapers and magazines, books and all forms of advertising, people are affected, both as individuals and as part of the many groups to which they variously belong. Individuals, and through them, institutions, systems and organisations are informed and shaped. Media influence, whether open or hidden, does not affect everything uniformly. Because of the complex interaction of a network of factors, media influence is not consistent but is dependent upon those factors prevailing upon a situation at any given time. The influence can be obvious or hidden, intended or incidental, but whatever and however, the media does have substantial and often long-lasting effect in all areas of society.

The mass media are identified as a significant source of children's sex knowledge and information since the sexual element is a formidable component throughout the entire media network, and, if anything, tends to be emphasised (UNESCO 1965; Shaffer 1966; Farrell 1978; Farquhar 1990; Gillham 1997; Granada 1997). The whole array of media elements are referred to in the literature, some, direct and obvious, like television, newspapers, videos etc., others less obvious and indirect like advertising and pop songs (London County Council 1964; Pickering 1965; Buchwald 1972; Farrell 1978; Musgrave 1978; Fidge 1978a; Granada 1997).

" As we sit here tonight, discussing this subject (sex education) hundreds of thousands of homes throughout the country are showing pictures concerning some aspects of sex relationships, with the young children, sitting in front of the television and absorbing lessons on sex education."

(Summerskill 1976).

" Actually children are getting more sex education in one week's viewing of television commercials than they'll get in four years in the classroom, and most of this TV-type sex education, can be very distorted."

(Buchwald 1972).

Information is not always responsibly presented, and is often of a type that stimulates or provokes (Shipman 1971; Farrell 1978; Luff 1996).

" If a visitor from Mars examined the media, he would surely be convinced that, the society in which we live is obsessed by sex, violence and greed."

(Chelmsford 1976).

But the problem is not new, 270 years earlier, Isaac Watts, in 1725 is quoted as having said that children's ears should be:

" ..ever kept from all immodest stories, wanton songs or amorous romances, and their eyes from lewd and unclean pictures."
(quoted in Safford 1971).

On the question of the influence of the media on what is taught, Taylor and others (1974b), said:

"...the organs of the mass media (the press and television), strongly influence what the school teaches. The power of the media to influence what is taught, may sometimes become as great as that of the Head or the individual teacher or the profession in general, before the implications of this are fully appreciated. Sex education provides a topical example."

Children are bombarded with sex from the mass media (Menzies 1971; Winn 1984; Gammage 1989; Collyer 1995; Tucker 1997), and the child has no privacy from its intrusion (Calderone 1969; Wetton and Moon 1987). Sex taboos have given way to commercialised sex titillation (Hemming 1971a; Docherty 1986; Daily Telegraph 1996).

Research in the mid 1950s concerning the influence of American comics reported them as being both wrong and bad, and stimulating children sexually (Wertham 1955). It was said that information from the media in Sweden in the 1950s made the contents of the Authority's sex education manual appear old fashioned and moralising (Sjovall 1970). The message to children is that there is nothing wrong with the new morality and new sex attitudes (Kadri 1967; Winn 1984).

Misinformation and distortion, romantic fantasy, sordid details and contentious issues are freely available through the media (Buchwald 1969; Calderone 1969; Proops 1971; Goldman and Goldman 1982). Not surprisingly, it has been suggested that such information is not always desirable (Irwin and Spira 1977). Heads would like to see the emphasis on explicit sex in the media, toned down (Halford 1978). The misinformation and exploitation of sex need to be countered through the provision of sex education (British Council of Churches 1966; Drake 1968; Fidge 1978; Ray and Went 1995).

Sex information which is incidentally picked up from the media has been seen in the past to have a harmful effect on the child's attitudes and values (London County Council 1964). Teenage sexual experience was said to be related to the extent to which they had accepted the 'teenage mythology' created by television, press and radio (Schofield 1965).

Watching unsuitable television meant children would be unduly influenced by the glamourised immorality and violence (Chanter 1966). Children asked questions about the meanings of words, which they knew had some sexual connotation, and which they had picked up from random sensational reports in the press and on television (BBC 1971; Collyer 1995).

Unstructured and random information which comes to children through the media is problematic.

" As one might expect, the range and admixture of knowledge, myth and fantasy are very wide, and the whole is characterised by disconnectedness - bits and pieces of information, picked up in various ways and places and frequently misunderstood or wrongly interpreted. Children pick up words and scraps of allusion from conversation, television, radio, the press and advertisements, to which they give some sort of meaning, however bizarre."

(BBC 1971).

The portrayal of sex behaviour, attitudes and values are very explicit these days, and together with the wide range of sex-related topics which are addressed in the media (Winn 1984), children have a considerable pool of information, whether they are able to make sense of it or not (Massey 1990).

Not all sex information via the media is necessarily in the perceived, 'likely to harm' category. Some would be regarded as coming through 'wholesome' television entertainment, or documentary/serious programmes, which were not specially made for the educational market (BBC2 1982; ITV 1988).

The media are extensively used for specific educational purposes. This is obvious in respect of films and videos, radio and television, which by their nature allow the public to be aware of any of the educational programmes which are being broadcast or shown. Other methods of media communication, like newspapers, magazines, advertising, and books might have articles or subjects which relate to sex education, or be addressed to

some section of the public, for the express aim of sex educating, but any such initiative will not necessarily be applicable to the issue of primary school sex education. They will raise sex education awareness.

Arguments for and against sex education, and reports about certain developments or innovations in the subject will generally reach the public through the media, therefore on this level of informing the public of the issues, and by providing a forum for debate, the media can be a powerful influence in the sex education decision-making process and in letting the public know what is going on.

The fact that much of the material for sex education is in the form of radio and television broadcasts, films, video tapes, computer software and so on could mean that its influence, and children's responses to it are much the same as their responses to this section of the media in general. If this is the case it means that such materials would be very influential. Other formats, like books, magazines, slides, poster and resource packs are fairly standard as educational aids, and may not have the same degree of influence, as the more visual/entertainment type of presentation.

Apart from the unplanned, incidental, sex educating and sex informing nature of the mass media their influence regarding sex education is seen on three levels. The first applies to the media when it is used as a vehicle for specific teaching. The second comes when the media sex educates as part of a public service, or identifies the topic in debate, raising awareness, commenting or providing a forum for argument/views. Lastly the media influences by bringing to educational materials the skills and

techniques used and developed in the world of commerce, evoking the kind of response experienced in relation to the media generally.

Richman and Urban (1978), reported on various aspects of health education through television, namely that:

1. The public regard television as the number one source of news information, and rated television as the most desirable and credible of the mass media.
2. As a visual-auditory system, television was ideal for communication with non-readers.
3. The disadvantages of, not being able to choose your own suitable broadcast time; the fact that the message is seen and then gone; the limited treatment of the subject, and the fact that you may not be able to see all programmes in a series.
4. Mass media can arouse interest in health topics.

The disadvantages in 3. above are largely overcome these days with the wide-spread use of video recorders. Interest in television as a prime source of information is worldwide (Frank 1970; Mohl 1970). There is a greater level of recall of information which has been received audio-visually (Klapper 1954). Unexpectedly it was found that those who are well educated watch fewer news or documentary type programmes than those who are not (Swinehart 1968), thus the visual media could be very advantageous for those who are, say, poor at reading.

While public health education through television was shown to increase awareness, it did not bring about behavioural change (Udry et al 1972), but it could change strongly held attitudes (O'Keefe 1971). Television was ideal with large classes, held individual's attention, made visual impact, provided illustrative material not otherwise available and children absent could tune in at home (Laslett 1963).

Currently the availability of the broadcasting companies' specific programmes for schools provides a very powerful addition to the school's resources. Whatever the benefits might be, it has been suggested that if the teacher does not 'like' the programme it may not be used (Lewis 1979).

Since the 1940s the BBC has been producing programmes which support the developing concept of sex education (Fawdry 1971), these were the radio programmes about birth and physical development. Programmes were seen as an aid to teachers, who otherwise might not have been able to teach the subject

" Teachers, especially in primary schools, who lack experience in teaching even the broad biological facts of reproduction may find it helpful to make use of the school broadcasts in sound and television."

(London County Council 1964).

Continuing use of broadcasts in the 1st. year of secondary school, 'even if the children have had such lessons at the top end of junior school' is recommended (Edmonds 1968). In 1967 the BBC began discussions to consider sex education for eight to nine year olds. It was that swell of interest which culminated in the BBC's initiative in 1971 to produce material on radio (radio-vision film strips, 'Where do Babies Come From?' and "Growing Up"), and television ("Merry-Go-Round") (Fawdry 1971). Aberdeen was the first area in Britain to have a sex education programme on television (Grampian 1968). This, called 'Living and Growing' was aimed at ten to thirteen year olds. 'Living and Growing' and 'Merry-Go-Round' (now re-named 'Sex Education') have both undergone three revisions to date (1988). Support for the SCHEP course by the humanities style series 'Lifetime' indicates the continuing development of the media (BBC 1982).

The sex education debate is both informed, and, at times conducted through the media (Granada 1997). From leading articles, editorial comment, reports of education committees, and readers' letters, it was possible to identify four main areas of concern. Firstly, is it necessary to provide children with sex information? If so, the three remaining points are: who is to do it? at what age? what will it include? (Gill et al 1971).

The teen magazines, with their agony columns suggest the need for adequate and early sex education (Honey 1978; Daily Telegraph 1996; Owen 1997; T.E.S. 1997). Farrell (1978) reported that parents found books and films on sex education, not readily available, a situation which now no longer pertains.

" In the last few years there has been a substantial increase in the number of books available for sex education, both at home and at school. We have moved rapidly from a situation where it was difficult to find anything suitable, particularly for junior-aged children, to where the potential choice is almost overwhelming."
(Vent 1989).

From time to time sex education resources are drawn to public attention through the news media (ITN 1978), but the availability of media-style resources to the public, apart from through broadcasting channels, is very haphazard. Printed and other resources have been widely listed from the early 1940s (Bibby 1944, 1951; Manley 1964a; HEC 1976; IPPF 1978; Craft 1980; Speight 1982; NCWGB 1989; HEA 1989; Sanders and Swinden 1990; Brook 1997). Audio-visual aids tend to be available mostly to schools and similar organisations. The availability of books to the public, through booksellers and libraries was variable and depended largely on where you lived and the attitudes of the supplier (NCWGB 1989).

Much computer-related material is now readily available for home and school use.

Sex education through the mass media will be both casual and specific depending on the nature of the medium. Articles, publications, programmes and multi-media presentations for the public, with a sex education focus or content will influence the sex education scene by informing children who happen to see them and influencing teachers' and others' attitudes.

The final concept of influence comes from the fact that teaching aids and initiatives which are media-type or based, will benefit from the skills of production techniques, communication skills, dissemination networks, appropriateness of style and the professionalism of the media industry. The availability of such resources could influence the decision-making process.

1.6 POLITICAL AND LEGAL INFLUENCE UP TO THE MID-1970s

Before the 1944 Act, it is possible to see the development of some level of influence, albeit very gradual, from the Board of Education (subsequently Ministry, then Department), on areas of the curriculum which evolved into sex education. Tracing this from the early 1900s, negative attitudes are apparent. The only mention of an area of study tending towards some aspects of sex education from the Board of Education in 1905 was a mention in elementary science, that 'human physiology' was a subject unsuitable for detailed treatment in school (Board of Education 1905). That such matters were still unacceptable in 1914, is supported by reference to a case involving a teacher, who taught physiological facts about reproduction to 11yr - 13yr old girls, which involved the Board of Education to ministerial level (Musgrave 1977).

A report from the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education, in 1919 urged discussion of the 'great problem of sex hygiene' in connection with nature study (Musgrave 1978). But both the 1927 and 1937 editions of the 'Handbook' contained the identical advice:

" Anything in the way of ambitious instruction in anatomy and physiology should however be avoided."

(Board of Education 1927; Board of Education 1937).

The Chief Medical Officer to the Board, in 1929, concluded that the very poor implementation of hygiene was due to the fact that health education was not really part of the British curricular tradition, and so not regarded as important, was not easily examinable and touched directly on the home in a way that could be critical of what parents did (Board of Education 1929).

The publication of the Board's Pamphlet 119, marks the first 'official' recognition of sex education within the province of the teaching profession (Board of Education 1943). Schools were assured of the Board's support:

" The Board are, however, concerned to offer an assurance of their warm support and encouragement to all those in schools who are giving serious attention to this subject...and to affirm their belief that their initiative...has a wide measure of approval and support."

(Board of Education 1943).

This official pamphlet, issued by the Board, 'under the stress of war', not only recognised the need for some kind of sex education but the importance of teacher training in this regard.

The terms of the Education Act, 1944, laid down details for local authorities to draw up Articles of Management (now called Articles of Government) for primary schools, designating conduct and control of the curriculum. The authority determined the general educational character of the school and its place in the local system, the managers (now governors) would have the general direction of the conduct of the school and of the curriculum, the head controlled the internal organisation, management and discipline of the school.

Apart from the requirement to give Religious Instruction in all schools, the Education Act, 1944, made no other prescription for the curriculum, except as might stem from the Aims of the Act, namely:

"...and it shall be the duty of the local education authority for every area, so far as their powers extend, to contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community, by securing that efficient education throughout those stages shall be available to meet the needs of the population of their area."

(Education Act 1944. Section 7.).

In a footnote on the Act, regarding the interpretation of the word 'moral'

it has been stated:

" (d) "Moral".- The duty to contribute towards the moral development of the community in the way required by the section implies that the duties of the local education authority will be regarded as including the provision of sex education."

(Taylor and Saunders 1971).

The fact that the concept of sex education was subsumed within the word 'moral' was almost completely lost on most educationalists.

Reference back to the 1943 pamphlet is made in the Ministry's, Pamphlet 31 (Ministry of Education 1957), regarding the requirement for the adequate training of staff. The responsibility of the head in making provision for sex education, and the possibility of all teachers having to answer sex related questions, as and when they arise is made clear. The appropriateness of dealing with sex education matters in the school, at whatever age the children ask (given that more regular provision is made for secondary aged pupils) is well based, not least because teachers are in loco parentis.

In drawing attention to features of school life which contribute most to the physical, mental and social well-being of pupils, the Department's Education Pamphlet No. 49, 1966, suggested that health education courses should prepare children for puberty and ensure they have an understanding of the basic facts of reproduction (Department of Education and Science 1966). This publication envisaged sex education lessons, with care being taken to select a 'suitable' teacher to give them. A pilot study of teachers' views on sex education by the Department in 1974, (heads and assistants), showed general agreement on the wider aspects of sex education (Department of Education and Science 1975).

Much political pressure related to sex education has been seen as opposing, or hindering its introduction. One of the forms of opposition has been identified as political, though often associated with the opponents' political aims, rather than the content of the proposed sex education (Burke 1970; Nazer 1970). The importance of avoiding political expediency has been urged:

"...health educators, must do all they can to influence health and health-related policy away from those determined solely by political expediency and towards policies that benefit the people..."
(Taylor 1977).

However, while there is the need to protect health education policy-making from political expediency, powerful social and political energies are needed to change attitudes, create the resources and institutional structures needed to sustain innovation and change, in health-related matters (Wang 1977). Political pressures were found to create inhibiting and controversial situations regarding school sex education (Goldman and Goldman 1982), and they reported the existence of strong taboos operating to limit enquiry into children's developing sexuality in the form of political and institutional obstruction.

The opposition to the research into children's sexuality experienced in American schools was seen to be due to the direct political control of the school system (Goldman and Goldman 1982). In Britain since the mid 1970s, the curriculum has become a national political issue, featuring prominently in the new orthodoxy, and it is thought that this centralisation will impoverish curriculum thought and practice (Alexander 1984).

Central Government in Britain has influence over the general provision and nature of education, through the law-making process. From time to time, the subject of the debates might be specific to sex education, as was the case for example in January 1976 (Hansard 1976). Individual members of Parliament can have considerable influence, either through their office, for example, the Minister of Education expressing his personal support for sex education (Crowther-Hunt 1976), or the case of the Junior Minister of Education exercising personal influence over HEC Publications over and above what might have been regarded as government policy (Fidge, Boyson, HEC and DES 1982 / 1983), and on public opinion by, say, remarks through the media on matters concerning children's sexuality, or the like (Townsend 1978; Fidge and Rumbold 1983).

Governmental influence, in terms of political pressure, has until recently been slight. Each major political party has, through its policies had different priorities, but to some extent the safeguards of the decentralisation of the British system has modified the political impact at school level. In Britain, legal constraints on the curriculum were few, before the late 1970s - early 1980s. Influence passes through the decision-making process within education, which has been described as a structural hierarchy of institutions with the Department of Education and Science at the top, and running down, and through the local authority to the school, then a further splitting of levels in the school of, governors, head, head of department and finally the class teacher (Harding and Kelly 1977). The DES is naturally perceived as the foremost source of advice on education, as might be suggested when the BBC sought 'official' advice in the preparation of their sex education programmes (BBC 1971).

Possible influence through government initiated research was slow to begin with, even though the 1944 Act made such provision. Powers in the Act for the Minister to aid educational research led to various research and development initiatives, which, though stimulating curriculum development, did not alter the legal position set out above. Influence on the curriculum was felt through the various governmental reports and publications, and through the work of different bodies set up with governmental or ministerial authority. Under these powers the National Foundation for Educational Research was established in 1945; the Curriculum Study Group, established in 1962; which was quickly superseded by the Schools Council in 1964.

Other sources of influence were the Reports which came from the duties attaching to the Central Advisory Councils (Bassett 1970). These and other official reports often had direct or indirect influence concerning sex education. The Hadow Reports, 1926, 1931, heralded the establishment of junior departments. The Alblemarle Report, 1958, dwelt on the changes in society and the consequent effect on the needs of young people. The Bessey Report, 1962, referred to aspects of the developmental processes of young people and the training needs of leaders in meeting these. The Crowther Report, 1959, the Newsom Report, 1963, and the Plowden Report, 1967, all made reference to the needs of the young for sex education, moral education and education in personal relationships (Burke 1970). The Plowden Report was set to be a major influence in primary education (Peters 1969). Since its publication its influence has resulted in fundamental changes affecting many of the facets of primary education. But the recommendations it contained for primary sex education did not gain the overwhelming acceptance given to other aspects of the Report.

1.7 POLITICAL AND LEGAL INFLUENCES FROM 1980

Since the beginning of the 1980s, various publications from government departments have made it clear that sex education is considered an appropriate topic for inclusion in the school curriculum (DES 1981; DES 1986). The publication on the school curriculum (DES 1981), developed from the earlier consultative document (DES 1977), has been widely discussed and has resulted in a considerable reappraisal of the way in which the partners in the service discharge their statutory responsibilities. It is in the opinion of the Secretaries of State, that in response to changing demands of the world outside the schools, the curriculum must reflect the fundamental values of society and the many issues facing pupils as they mature.

" It must include, religious education, moral education, health education (including sex education), and preparation for parenthood and family life."

(DES 1981; Appendix 1: 3.0)

This publication (DES 1981) together with Circular 6/81 (DES 1981a) resulted in the review of school curricula (Bexley 1981), and the publication of curriculum statements by local authorities (KCC 1990). Much of this tended to consolidate work already undertaken in the late 1970s, in response to Circular No. 14/77 (DES 1977a), with statements of curriculum aims and objectives being sent to the Department in 1978 (Parsons and Steadman 1988).

Education Act 1980: Under this Act, the Regulations (Education [School Information] Regulations 1981) made, established the right of parents to be

informed of the manner and context in which schools deal with sexual matters. But they were not given the right to withdraw their children (DES 1981a).

Education (No.2) Act 1986: This Act contained important provisions for sex education. Section 18 of the Act (which came into operation September 1st 1988), for County, Special and Controlled schools, placed a duty on the governing bodies to consider whether or not to include sex education in the secular curriculum. If they decided to include sex education they were required to produce a policy statement setting out the details of their decision.

Where sex education was to be provided, head teachers were to ensure that it was carried out in accordance with the governors' policy, unless the policy was incompatible with the requirements for public examinations (which would not apply to primary schools). New Articles of Government for schools would be necessary to include these requirements.

Section 18 of the Education (No.2) Act 1986, does not apply to Aided and Special Agreement schools, and Section 19(1), which deals with the secular curriculum of such schools makes no separate provision for sex education as compared with other parts of the curriculum.

Circular No. 11/87: This Circular (DES 1987), made clear the many aspects of the sex education guidelines and provisions as set out in the 1986 Act (DES 1986a). It opens with the words:

" Appropriate and responsible sex education is an important element in the work of schools in preparing pupils for adult life. It calls for careful and sensitive treatment."

(DES 1987: Introduction 1.).

It goes on to say:

" This Circular is set within the general context of new statutory provisions relating to the school curriculum contained in the Education (No.2) Act 1986. The Secretary of State has now initiated wide consultations on the Government's proposals for legislation on the national curriculum which will affect these provisions and responsibilities for the curriculum within schools. The 1986 Act places responsibility on governing bodies for determining what sex education should be offered in their schools and the Secretary of State reaffirms that this will remain so with the national curriculum."

(DES 1987: Introduction 3.).

In regard to Aided and Special Agreement schools, paragraph 5, of the Circular (DES 1987), which refers to Section 19(1) of the 1986 Act (DES 1986a), concludes with these words (in the original are printed in bold):

" Nevertheless, the Secretary of State hopes that in discharging their responsibilities the governing bodies and head teachers of these schools will as far as possible have due regard to the general guidance in this circular."

(DES 1987: paragraph 5.).

Under the 1986 Act (DES 1986a), in determining their policy, the governors are to have regard to; representations from the local community, or the chief officer of police, and except in non-aided or special agreement schools, consult with the head. Governors are asked to refer to the 'Health Education from 5 - 16' booklet (DES 1986). While it is for governors to decide the content, if sex education is to be included, they must conform to section 46 of the 1986 Act that pupils are encouraged to have due regard for moral considerations and the value of family life.

Section 18(2)(a) of the Act (DES 1986a) does allow for governors to decide against including sex education in their school's curriculum, but they are reminded by the Secretary of State of the widely accepted view:

" ...that schools have a responsibility to their pupils to offer at least some education about sexual matters, in particular, pupils may need to know about sexual matters to ensure that education about health is not impaired, and that for example they understand about the relationship between certain forms of sexual behaviour and AIDS."

(DES 1987: paragraph 7.).

Under the terms of the Act (DES 1986a) there is no statutory right for parents to withdraw their children, and it is for the governors to accept or reject any requests they may receive. The needs of sex education for children in Special schools is considered. The place of sex education in the primary school, together with the need for sensitivity and consideration of any religious or cultural factors is addressed. Moral and legal matters are referred to e.g, the ages of consent for heterosexual and male homosexual relationships. The likelihood that controversial matters might need consideration is recognised. Teaching about AIDS is regarded as essential, referring to two DES publications on the subject (DES 1986b; DES 1987a). The implications of contraceptive advice to children under 16 was also discussed (DES 1987).

Circular 11/87 (DES 1987) required action by the local authorities, governors of all schools, heads and staff. In all, Circular 11/87 made clear the requirements of the Education (No.2) Act 1986, and brought considerable pressure on the education system.

Before the new framework of the 1986 Act, within which teachers and governors of all state maintained schools must work, there was virtually no legal guidance at all about sex education. Heads were able to include it if they wished, and the content, resources and teaching methods were very much what the school devised. The consultative process involving parents

and governors and such other professionals as may be, was particular to the style of each individual head. In many schools the governors would not have featured very significantly. With this legislation the governors were empowered with the ultimate authority for deciding whether or not to implement sex education, and in some quarters it was feared that this could be a retrograde step.

" We would hope that the passing of this Act does not mean that the good work done in this area by many primary schools in the past will stop as the result of the decisions of some governing bodies."
(Sanders and Swinden 1990).

Much of this legislation stimulated considerable media attention which was at times sensational. Some of the publicity raised concerns for governors, parents and teachers which could have proved problematic for heads, whether they were for or against school-based sex education. Formerly the negotiated withdrawal of children was very much the responsibility of the head, and this, if requested was generally sensitively done. Now, apart from the actuality of parents not having the legal right to withdraw their children, it has been pointed out that this becomes more difficult when sex education arises spontaneously or in a cross-curricular mode (Clarity Collective 1989). This legislation also brought about revisions within established teaching materials (Grampian TV 1988).

But the kind of influence and pressure which flowed from this legislation was perceived by some to be very political. At this time other legal influences were evident which many teachers felt impinged on their responsibilities within the sex education realm. Two particular cases in point were the Gillick vs DHSS case in 1985, and the 'Clause 28' concern in regard to the Local Government Bill 1988.

In the Gillick case, Mrs. Gillick tried to show that it was unlawful for young persons under the age of 16 to be given contraceptive treatment or advice unless the parents' permission had first been obtained. Her case was lost on appeal to the House of Lords (Gillick vs DHSS 1985). This unsettled many teachers and doctors in the first instance, and inhibited some sex education work already in hand. Since many primary sex education policies and materials refer to contraception in some form or another (Hemming and Maxwell 1975; Docherty 1986; Grampian TV 1988; C.C 1990), there was confusion over what teachers could say to their pupils. It was made clear that teachers, acting within their sex education policy were not acting unlawfully in giving such information and advice (AMMA 1987).

The Local Government Act 1988: This Act contained a clause which caused considerable confusion regarding the teaching of aspects of homosexuality in schools, even though it did not apply to schools at all (Massey 1990). The clause in question was 'Clause 28', which made it an offence for local authorities to promote or encourage homosexuality. It caused considerable confusion in local government. Doubts arose over whether it was safe to speak about homosexuality in school, with its subsequent effect on sex education. Not only was this shown to be erroneous (DfE 1994), it adversely affected AIDS education programmes which were in response to the AIDS campaign promoted earlier by the Government (1985). Since AIDS education was set to become a requirement in schools, it would have made a nonsense of the legislation (Sanders and Swinden 1990; Junior Education 1992). The myth that it is illegal to include homosexuality information in school still exists for some teachers (Sanders and Swinden 1990; KCC 1992).

The Education Reform Act 1988: This transformed the secular curriculum in maintained schools by introducing the National Curriculum, which formed the major part of a new basic curriculum. It did not explicitly provide for sex education as a separate subject but aspects were included in the Science Curriculum. To comply with the general duty to prepare pupils for 'the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life' (section 1 (2)(b)) it was argued that the provision of sex education would be necessary (Harris et al 1992). The requirements concerning knowledge of human reproduction in Key Stages 1 and 2 left the detail of how this would be interpreted and delivered to individual schools. The National Curriculum Council, established under the 1988 Act had, emphasised health education (which included sex education) as a 'cross-curricular' theme (N.C.C. 1990a/b) and so it is ...

'.... probably true to say that , in the light of the 1988 Act and the introduction of the National Curriculum, any parent's or child's expectation that the child would receive sex education at school was justifiable, even if there was no specific 'right' to sex education.'

(Harris 1996)

Apart from those elements of sex education contained in the National Curriculum, the position in primary schools after the 1988 Act was unchanged.

Following the 1988 Education Reform Act, the confusion and controversy which surrounded sex education, the concerns for teenage sexual activity and pregnancy and HIV/AIDS strengthened the case for making sex education compulsory (Harris 1996). Concern that sex education might not have been accorded the priority it required was expressed by the House of Commons Health Select Committee (H.C.H.S.C. 1993) who called for, its inclusion in

the National Curriculum, the designation of teachers as sex education co-ordinators, and the national monitoring of the subject. The Sex Education Forum's Survey (1992) found possibly a third of school governing bodies were in breach of the 1986 Education Act by not having a written policy published for sex education. In Northern Ireland (where the current position is virtually that of England and Wales after the 1986 Act) each school is required to have a written policy on sex education, endorsed by the governors and notified to the parents. Only 15% of primary schools had such a statement by the mid 1990s (H.P.A.N.I. 1996). The need for action on sex education was becoming more evident as there was confusion at school level about implementing and delivering it, lack of resources and the need for better guidance (S.E.F. 1992). The Sex Education Forum drew up its own guidance (S.E.F. 1992a). Concern for a range of issues was expressed in the debates preceeding the 1993 Education Act (House of Lords Debates Vol. 574 1993).

The Education Act 1993: This deals with sex education in Part VI Section 241. The main impact is to amend the National Curriculum so that only biological aspects of human behaviour are included (Section 241 (4)), to make sex education compulsory for all secondary pupils (Section 241 (1)) including teaching about HIV/AIDS, other STDs and non-biological aspects of human sexual behaviour (Section 241 (2)). Sex education is not compulsory for primary pupils, so the situation remains as it was before the Act. School governors, in consultation with the head, decide if any sex education shall be given (other than that included in the National Curriculum). Any secondary and primary child may be withdrawn from all or any sex education (except as taught in the National Curriculum), upon the

request of the parent (Section 241 (3)). The governors of all maintained and grant-maintained schools (and maintained special schools where pupils are being provided with secondary education) must make a separate written statement of their policy on the provision of sex education, keep it up to date and make copies available for parents of the school. Details of the implications of the 1993 Act are enlarged upon in Circular 5/94 (DFE 1994).

Given the importance of effective sex education, and the fact that parents may withdraw children from all non-National Curriculum sex education, concern has been expressed that such children might be denied appropriate sex education from any source. Advice and help for withdrawing parents is suggested in Circular 5/94, but parents need not avail themselves of it. As yet the obligation on parents to provide their child with a 'suitable' education under the terms of the Education Act 1944 (Section 36), which might arguably be said to include sex education, has not been tested in the courts.

The right to withdraw a child from sex education has given rise to considerable controversy (Harris 1996). Concern includes issues such as; being denied information about an activity young people (above the age of 16) are legally entitled to engage in (whether married or not); the rights of children to receive sex education; the lack of provision to consider the wishes of the child (e.g Children's Act 1989 Section 1(3) or U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 article 12) to say nothing of the practical difficulties of knowing when sex education will occur. Many children do not agree with this provision (Burghes 1994) and at least one Teachers' Union has said it would support a child who wished to legally

challenge this provision (TES 1994). An added problem is possible dispute between different people who could claim responsibility for a child, given the wide definition of 'parent' in the Education Acts (Bainham 1996). The issue of parental withdrawal of children who are being sexually abused at home has not yet been answered by the Government. In the event, few parents are likely to withdraw pupils since less than 5% disagree with schools providing sex education (Allen 1987; NFER 1994), though Balding et al (1989) found this figure could be as high as 16%.

Circular 5/94: This Circular (DfE 1994) sets out the statutory position for sex education following the 1993 Act, gives advice on its content and purpose, guidance on its implementation and development and describes the roles of those involved with it. It is seen as a positive document reflecting the perception that school based sex education is definitely 'a good thing' (Went 1994). In maintained primary schools it is still the duty of the governing body to consider whether, or at what stage to offer sex education (para 4) in consultation with the head (para 18). Teaching in schools should complement and support the role of parents (para 7). It sets down the moral framework for sex education (para 8), that it should not be value-free, but support the notion of stable family life, marriage and parental responsibilities and consider concepts (among others) of respect, self-restraint, dignity and fidelity. Teaching must be done with sensitivity, taking account of the widely differing backgrounds of children

In primary schools sex education will include preparation for the physical and emotional changes of growing up, an understanding of human reproduction, and the willingness to answer pupils' questions sensitively, bearing

in mind the maturity and needs of the class as a whole (para 10). The governors of primary schools in the maintained voluntary sector are not required to follow the detailed arrangements applicable to non-voluntary schools, but the Secretary of State hopes they will adopt similar procedures (para 15). They are required to have a written policy statement in accordance with Section 241 (5) of the Education Act 1993.

Governors are advised to draw upon the help and guidance of the head (there is a statutory duty to consult the head in county and controlled schools), LEA advisory staff, relevant N.C.C. publications, health authority and similar bodies, representatives of the community (paras 18, 19, 46) and parents (paras 28, 46). Governors should maintain a distinction between determining a policy and the role of the head and staff in delivering the curriculum according to that policy (para 20). The head (and other staff) has an important role in contributing to the preparation, review and updating of the governing body's policy (para 29). The importance of properly trained teachers and governors is emphasised (para 43).

The right of withdrawal (paras 36, 37) is seen as a key issue, in spite of the inherent difficulties referred to above. The vast majority of parents support school sex education, many having been consulted and involved in its development. Advice is given of ways of ascertaining if parents are under any misunderstanding about the school's policy, and if they would like any help from the school in sex education materials for their child (para 37). The Circular has useful information on Schools' legal obligations (Annex A), a summary of the law on Sexual Behaviour (Annex B), and, guidance on good practice in developing the school's Sex Education Policy (Annex C)

In tracing the history of the development of sex education in schools from the early 1900s it can be seen how the gradual changes in society have altered attitudes and increasingly shown the need for sex education for all children. Since the 1980s the increasing levels of politicalisation sex education has been subjected to has created anomalies and ambivalence in some areas (Harris 1996), and the many changes it has been through leaves confusion and uncertainty in the minds of many who are involved in determining, developing and delivering it (Massey 1990; Scott and Thomson 1992; Green 1994; Reiss 1995).

The need to keep abreast of recent developments in sex education has not proved easy for many heads in the light of the considerable work over-load they have experienced in the many administrative, and curriculum demands that have rained down on them since the mid 1980s (Gammage 1989; Trippe 1994).

Many heads may well feel that the increased levels of work resulting from recent legislation pushes sex education down their lists of priorities (Gammage 1989; Massey 1990). Others may be encouraged by the official guidance and clarification in developing a school policy for sex education. Whatever a head's particular stance there are many factors in the current legal and political situation which will influence the decision-making process.

1.8 NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

A large number of national organisations have aims which affect sex education in some way or another. Various degrees of influence can be traced back many years, ranging from those which inform public opinion to those which strive to advance or inhibit sex education in schools.

In 1920, the National Birthrate Committee promoted the concept that sex education should be considered a privilege, not an irksome duty (NBC 1923; see also Harris 1969). One of the first major experiments at sex education in elementary state schools, was undertaken in conjunction with The Alliance of Honour, in seven Welsh local authorities, lasting for eight years in the 1930s (Tucker and Pout 1934; Greaves 1965). In London's Conway Hall, on 1st. and 2nd. July 1933, the Federation of Progressive Societies and Individuals held a conference on sex education, at which a wide ranging series of papers was presented (FPSI 1935).

In the 1940s, the following organisations were among those recommended for materials and advice:

Alliance of Honour; Central Council for Health Education; Family Planning Association; Marriage Guidance Council; National Association for Mental Health, and the Society for Sex Education and Guidance.

(Bibby 1944).

The subject of telling children the facts of life was considered at the annual conference of the Association of Children's Officers in 1959 (Daily Express 1959). The National Council for the Unmarried Mother and Her Child (1966) addressed the concerns for pregnancy in adolescence. The National Secular Society (1970) reviewed some of the contemporary sex

education literature. The National Marriage Guidance Council (1972) publication placed sex education in the social context of the time.

Both the Schools Council and the Nuffield Foundation were very influential in their impact on children's sexual education (Schools Council 1967; 1968; 1977; Nuffield 1971; 1976). The Schools Council also worked in collaboration with other organisations (Schools Council/Nuffield 1971; Schools Council/ Health Education Council 1976; 1977).

The National Council for Civil Liberties was concerned for children's rights and matters relating to homosexuality and the teaching profession (NCCL 1972; 1978). The National Council for One Parent Families issued a report, which urged sex education for eight year olds (Independent TV 1978a); and an influential survey on the needs and circumstances of schoolgirl pregnancies (NCOPF 1979).

The Society for the Protection of the Disabled (ASBAH 1978; SPOD 1978; Kempton 1978), the Brook Advisory Centres (1984; 1985; 1997), the Association for Spina Bifida (1984), were producing sex education materials for the mentally handicapped. The National Council of Voluntary Organisations has promoted sex education as one of the factors instrumental in helping to prevent child sexual assault (Elliott 1985).

Children and divorce, abortion, and menstruation were topics considered by other societies (National Association of Youth Clubs 1987; National Abortion Campaign 1987; The Children's Society 1986; 1988). The National Council of Women of Great Britain recently considered the whole notion of

responsibility for sex education and issued a substantial review of the many publications on the subject (NCWGB 1984; 1989). Over twenty five years earlier, in 1960, the National Council of Women were unable to get agreement over the need for sex education before puberty (Brewer 1962). The National Organisation for Initiatives in Social Education considered the subject of sex education and multi-cultural factors (Whitney 1985).

To enable staff in schools including heads, to assess the position in their schools, regarding gender equality, to promote strategies and evaluate outcomes, the School Curriculum Development Committee and the Equal Opportunities Commission, produced an educational pack (Myers 1987). At the same time the Policy Studies Institute published research in connection with sex and personal relationships (Allen 1987).

The Health Education Authority (formerly the Health Education Council) had a major role in sex education development, both on its own and in collaboration with other organisations (HEA/ Family Planning Association 1978; HEA/Spastics Society 1979; Massey 1988; HEA 1989a). The Family Planning Association has been influential. Its Vice-President spoke in support of sex education during a debate in the Lords (Ruthven of Freeland 1976) and the Association does considerable work in training courses, publications and teaching materials (FPA 1983; 1988).

While not actually opposing sex education, some organisations are highly critical of much of the work that takes place. Their main objections are based on the liberal ideas and amoral or (in their view) immoral concepts and behaviours that are being promoted. Their pressure is largely based

on the need to return to the earlier moral values of chastity outside marriage and fidelity within it and to protect children from promiscuous or permissive influences, which they claim are encouraged by much of the current sex education.

Some of these are religious groups of a particular denomination. An Interdenominational body such as the Committee for the Advancement of Religious Education (1992), and others which are non-religious, like Family and Youth Concern (originally The Responsible Society Research and Education Trust), then simply, The Responsible Society], (1982); Family Education Trust (1991) and National Viewer's and Listener's Association (Whitehouse 1977) have all voiced criticisms.

The impact of these national organisations is predominantly in favour of sex education throughout the school system for children of all ages, conditions and cultures. Some tend to be very conservative, cautious and critical, though fewer in number. Possible influence on head teachers might come from these organisations.

1.9 UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE AND RESEARCH

Up to the mid 1950s research into sexual development had provided little understanding of the way people incorporate sexual ideas into their personal development (Ehrmann 1957). Between then and the late 1960s there was a paucity of research into the structure, content and outcomes of school sex education (Kirkendall 1968). More research was called for (Alvarez 1970; Burke 1970). But by the late 1970s little research had been done (Musgrave 1978).

In the early 1980s it was recognised that the study of children's sexuality was a key area for understanding children's growth (Goldman and Goldman 1982). Earlier observations, surveys and research showed that there was insufficient sex education (Palaez 1970; Beaumont of Whitley 1976; Crowther-Hunt 1976). Kirkendall (1968) commented on research which was helping to change attitudes towards sex education. However research in this discipline was comparatively small compared to other aspects of educational development, and many reasons were advanced for this.

It was concluded that sex educators:

- a) were practitioners and not researchers,
- b) had worked with children and 'sensed' their needs,
- c) had experienced obstacles and 'touchy' issues in developing the programmes,
- d) are organisers and activists and are seldom calm, detached, objective researchers,
- e) are educated to be teachers or community workers, not researchers,

and that, generally, teachers, for the most part regard their pupils as being sexless, a notion that sex education research tends to shatter (Kirkendall 1968; Goldman and Goldman 1988; Calderone and Johnson 1990).

Other reasons were also identified. Because much of the work done, had been by researchers in the sociology, psychology or related behavioural fields, it was thought that the hesitancy and fear of the scientifically objective researchers was based on the possibility that they might become involved in moralistic debate or caught up with essentially unprovable value issues (Kirkendall 1968).

Kirkendall (1968), further added:

" Finally, techniques and instruments for research in this area are poorly developed. Studies of sexual behaviour and education have never been wholly respectable, Consequently research in this field is generally less sophisticated than that in other behavioral areas."

The existence of very little child sex research was attributed to what Bernstein (1973), referred to as 'cultural discomfort over the topic of sexuality'.

In their cross cultural study, Goldman and Goldman (1982) made significant observations on the problems and difficulties of research into children's sexuality. They identified:

- a) difficulties over questioning children in some area of sexual knowledge (e.g. masturbation, homosexuality) because of social taboos,
- b) other societal issues of the perceptions of children being asexual,
- c) difficulties stemming from what has been described as 'the cult

of childhood innocence',

d) difficulties in gaining admission to schools to undertake their research,

e) constraints within the public school system over what it was possible to do once access to the schools had been achieved,

f) not to use the word 'sex' in presenting their research as this would have proved a problem,

and these difficulties were reported by all the research assistants working on this study.

Similar difficulties in this kind of research, and in gaining access to schools has been reported elsewhere (Schofield 1968; Fidge 1978a; Trudell 1993; Johnson et al 1994; Gillham 1997). It will be seen that many of the problems and difficulties found in undertaking research in this area foreshadow those experienced when embarking upon the process of implementing sex education in schools.

Because education is an applied discipline, the relationship between research and practice, is and should be reciprocal; research will illuminate new ideas which should aid innovation (C.A.C.E. 1967). Research being done in spite of the difficulties, can assist the educational community in planning sex education programmes based on an understanding of the child's sexual needs and development (Elias and Gebhard 1969). A conclusion also found in later research: .

" When asked what use the research would be to educators, it was stated that it would be useful in providing general insights for parents and teachers, and valuable guidelines for teachers and curriculum planners of human biology, health and sex education, and human relations courses."

(Goldman and Goldman 1982).

Research projects and articles are said to be instruments of change (Bassett 1970). But whether the claims made for research as a change agent can be substantiated, depends on what influence research has on those responsible for implementing change. In one study of 125 junior teachers (including heads and deputies), only 37 (29.6%) said they had read any research articles regarding sex education (Fidge 1978b). Doing the research is one thing, getting it across to where it will have effect, is another.

Much of the research is undertaken through the universities, but that is not the only way in which they can influence the implementation of sex education. While not directly pertinent to primary education, the universities, through the public examinations system, can encourage sex education, or facets of it. Burke (1970) gave eight examples of examining boards with subjects which impinge either directly or partially on sex education. More recent examples can also be found. Subjects and areas of study are given status if they are seen to be examinable (Little 1970; Musgrave 1978), and such subjects in the secondary sphere can influence what is found in primary schools.

Other means of influence through the universities exist where they have special units to support work in health or sex education. Many do, and the following will serve as examples of this area of influence:

- a) the Schools Health Education Unit, at the University of Exeter.
- b) the Centre for Health Education and Research at Christ Church College, Canterbury.
- c) the Health Education Unit, Department of Education, University of

Southampton,

d) Health Education Unit, University of Aston,

e) Health Education Unit, School of Education, University of Bath.

Additionally Universities can exercise influence through the courses they offer and the qualifications that may be obtained (e.g. U. of Southampton (Health Education) M.A. (Ed); King's College London (Health Education) MSc; U. of Reading (Moral, Personal and Social Edn.) M.A.), and relevant publications (U. of Aston 1984; U. of Exeter 1985; Braun and Eisenstadt [OU] 1985; National Extension College 1988).

Institutions involved in teacher training could be very influential in developing health and sex education. This influence was recognised decades ago. Newman, Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education, in response to the very poor standard and sparse implementation of hygiene, in schools in the early 1930s, determined that the way to improve the situation was to introduce the necessary courses into teacher training colleges (Musgrave 1978). Basic sex education training was suggested as necessary as part of the normal professional training of teachers (Bibby 1948). In 1957 the Ministry of Education observed:

" ...many students still come to college very poorly informed in all aspects of sex, and some may still be in the throes of emotional disturbance or immaturity. By the end of their training the student should be as fully informed as possible about the normal physical and emotional development of children, and helped to overcome or manage any problems of their own."
(Ministry of Education 1957).

In the same publication, the Ministry expected that all students at college would undertake a health education course, both at the personal level and also in preparation for teaching the subject.

In the 1960s it was emphasised that teachers should have training in sex education at college (C.A.C.E. 1967; Schulz 1968). From numerous sources the same need has been identified and urged upon the authorities (B.C.C. 1966; Dawkins 1967; Aberdeen Education Authority 1969; Little 1970; Massey 1990; Scott and Thomson 1992; Trippe 1994; Ray and Went 1995).

It was evident that the colleges were not meeting it. In a survey of all teacher training colleges, 66% replied, of whom only 38% ran formal sex education courses; most of these (27%) were for the personal education of the students, leaving only about 11% of the courses aimed at preparing students to teach sex education (Greaves 1964).

The position in America was even worse (Malfetti and Rubin 1968). The surveys indicated a dearth of sex education training for teachers on both sides of the Atlantic. Whalley (1972) found that only 26% of student teachers reported finding written material as their main source of sex information; they were supportive of the need for school-based sex education as a result of their own experience, and from their replies it was apparent that sex education at their level in college would be very beneficial. The Department of Education at King's College, London, considered it essential for students to attend the health education course which contained some sex education content (Little 1970).

This was approximately at the time when several significant steps were taken in the UK regarding sex education, namely the introduction of the Grampian TV sex education series 'Living and Growing' (Grampian TV 1968) and the B.B.C. programmes of the Radio Vision film-strips and the 'Merry-go-Round' sex education films (S.B.C. 1971), a time when very few trained teachers would have been in schools, prepared for sex education work.

A later study indicated that 48% of a cohort of 125 primary teachers said their college courses had had some work related to sex education, though whether these were all detailed courses was not indicated (Fidge 1978b).

A more recent U.K. study showed that less than 25% of training institutions had health education as a requirement for all students (Williams and Roberts 1985).

Many teachers have serious misconceptions about sex related information and some reluctance to teach controversial aspects of the subject (Benell 1969; K.E.C. 1979; K.C.C. 1992). The idea that teachers, because they are adults, know enough about sex to teach it, need not be true. Training is essential. Training and Higher Education institutions could be a major source of influence, not only through the training and courses they offer, but also in the research they sponsor or undertake .

1.10 LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY

Local authorities have had substantial influence on the development of education for decades. Where local authorities were determined to implement particular policies, it was well within their ability to strongly influence the acceptance of their plans. Whether such influence could be sustained in controversial areas, compared to non-controversial ones could show what influence they may have had over sex education decisions.

The concept of a primary curriculum began to be gradually formulated with the establishment of junior schools and departments from 1919 onwards (N.L.W.A.C. 1966). It became increasingly necessary to consider what was appropriate for the curriculum of this type of organisation. There were groups and individuals working, with difficulty, in the 1930s to establish sex education in schools (F.P.S.I. 1935; Dennett 1935; Musgrave 1978). Chance (1935) reported that every attempt in London schools to introduce sex education had been blocked by the education authority.

The changing social climate after World War 2, and passing the 1944 Act, changed attitudes towards sex education. Several influential publications were produced at this time (Board of Education 1943; N.U.T. 1944; Chesser and Dawe 1945; Bibby 1948), which confirmed changing attitudes to sex education from the very reticent position of the Board before the War (Musgrave 1978). In a booklet by the L.C.C's Inspectors, 1949, attitudes were different to those over a decade before (Chance 1935).

" These decisions do not mean that schools....are required to provide sex education, or, if they provide it, that they must do so in a prescribed way. It is entirely a matter for the heads concerned, in consultation with their staffs."

(L.C.C. 1949).

One might ask whether the change from control to choice was the result of changing post-war attitudes or a pragmatic approach to a sensitive topic.

Gradually local authorities began to issue documents relating to sex education (Cheshire 1958; Oxford 1960; Wiltshire 1963) the momentum increasing into the mid 1960s. In an American study, it was found that most superintendants and Board of Education members supported sex education, and considered it urgent (Johnson and Schutt 1966). Little (1970), reported that local authorities were being urged to take a greater initiative in promoting sex education, by:

- a) encouraging its inclusion on the normal school curriculum,
- b) encouraging teacher training,
- c) increasing ways of cooperating with parents.

Education Committee Reports suggested four main areas of concern:

- 1. Was it necessary to give children sex information ?
- 2. Who was to do it ?
- 3. At what age ?
- 4. What would it include ? (Gill et al 1971).

In the 1930s the school authorities could block developments they did not want (Freeman 1935), yet by the mid 1960s the sex education introduced by them was perceived by some as far too detailed (Pickering 1965). Certain education authorities accepted the need for sex education and issued directives on teaching it (Rogers 1972; Dearden 1976). Development was sporadic however (Chanter 1966; Hierons 1972; Rogers 1974) and this lack of leadership was seen as the cause for its non-implementation in the majority of areas (Chanter 1966). One explanation was that the education officers, while knowing generally that sex education had public support, did not believe it so in their area (Yarber 1979). This fear probably existed at school level when heads, faced with considering sex education, could not be sure the parents supported it. Farrell (1978) reported that:

" Children living in metropolitan districts were found to be more likely to say that they had had sex education in primary school than those those living in non-metropolitan areas (12% compared with 6%). It looks as if the most important factors determining whether a child receives sex education at primary school is the area in which they happen to live, and whether they are female." (Farrell 1978).

Whether an education authority had a sex education policy or not implied approval or disapproval (possibly neutrality). Many heads had anxieties that if they took an opposing position to that of the authority it could lead to conflict (Schofield 1977; Crawford 1978). From the mid 1960s a steady stream of local authorities published sex education initiatives (London C.C. 1964; Cheshire 1965; Oxfordshire 1966; Birmingham 1967; Newcastle 1968 and 1979; Sunderland 1969; Gloucestershire 1971; Hampshire 1973; Liverpool 1974; Kent 1990).

Little (1970) noted that sex education policies of the local education authorities (where they existed), fell into three groups:

1. Schools encouraged to include sex education in the normal curriculum.
2. Set the subject in normal curriculum but use 'experts' to deliver it.
3. Rely on Health Education Department or Officers to take the initiative.

Some LEAs regarded introducing sex education as an important task. Many did not. In a 1972 report on English local authorities (total 148) 43 said they were in favour of teaching the biological facts to 9 - 12 year olds, but only 18 agreed to social aspects of sex to the same age group. 36 had held a headteachers' conference, 31 had arranged some INSET 19 had published reports (Dennis 1972). Few authorities, were having much influence over the introduction of sex education. Within each individual

authority the situation regarding the implementation of sex education may have depended on whether the authority has produced a policy.

In-Service-Training was claimed to be an important element in the introduction of sex education (Aberdeen 1969; Burke 1970; H.E.C. 1972; Williams 1985), and where such support was not provided, the influence of the authority was diminished. But even where courses for sex education were organised, few teachers attended (Fidge 1978b).

The role of the LEA gradually began to change with the impetus of the education reforms ushered in from the 1980s (Harris 1996a). Schools became increasingly subject to legal requirements regarding the publication of information as the era of consumerism in education began to develop, and with it the centralisation of control over the curriculum (Plaskow 1988). In spite of the increasing intervention of central government in sex education, up to 1986 LEAs and schools were free to determine their own sex education policies. Headteachers decided whether or not to implement sex education and its content and organisation in the light of recommendations from central government and the LEA (Blair and Furniss 1995).

This changed with the 1986 Act when LEAs were required to state their policies for the secular curriculum (including sex education). In Circular 11/87 LEAs were required to consider the place of sex education in their policy statements for the secular curriculum and consider appropriate support for those involved in giving it (para 29). In determining the curriculum governors of maintained schools had to consider the LEA statement (governors of aided schools were asked to 'have regard' of the

LEA statement, and were free to determine their own policy on the secular curriculum) and decide whether to include sex education.

At the time of publication of Circular 11/87, for example, one local authority had a sex education policy comprising 13 lines of type, undated but originating c1978 (still current in 1987). It gave little guidance and was neutral in terms of encouraging heads to consider whether or not to implement (K.C.C. c1978). Croydon (1984) published a curriculum statement which made no mention of health or sex education. Under section 17 of the 1986 Education Act LEAs were required to determine and state their policies for the secular curriculum, and where sex education was included it had to conform to the requirements of section 46. The 1986 Education Act aimed to reduce the power of the LEA and bolster the independence of the school (Blair and Furniss 1995).

While 76% of LEAs said they offered training to governors, that amounted simply to distributing documents in some cases. In other cases fewer than half the number of governing bodies took up courses offered, and then were only represented by one or two members. Resources were inadequate, and very few LEAs were found to target whole governing bodies for training in developing sex education policies (Scott and Thomson 1992).

The role of the LEA under the requirements of the Education Act 1993 was set out in paras. 33 and 34 of Circular 5/94 and was almost identical to para. 14 of Circular 11/87 which it superseded. The main difference was the reference in Circular 5/94 that the LEA must have regard for the curriculum responsibilities laid upon it by section 1 of the Education

Reform Act 1988. In some quarters the 1993 Education Act has been seen as reducing the autonomy of the LEAs further, while increasing central prescription in curriculum matters (Blair and Furniss 1995). Blair and Furniss (1995) reported that many to whom Circular 5/94 was addressed (Heads, teachers, governors, LEA personnel) were unaware that the contents of the Circular represented an explanation of what the Minister understood by the requirements of the law in regard to sex education and/or his view of what constituted good practice. The requirements of the Act are open to other interpretations, which differ from those of the Minister (S.E.F. 1994), and while those responsible for sex education are bound to have regard to the Circular, it cannot dictate the outcome of their decisions since a Minister has no power to make binding rules except where there is legal authority for this (Blair and Furniss 1995).

LEAs have cooperated with District Health Authorities to find ways to assist schools to deliver sex education (Trippe 1994). But LEA help in supporting sex education was variable and low on the agenda of most LEAs (Scott and Thomson 1992). Many LEAs produce their own policies and guidelines for sex education (Massey 1990). But this was an area where confusion was rife over the purpose of these documents and what audience they were intended for. Almost all were aimed at schools and teachers, taking the governors' policies as given. Few gave help for policy-making, they lacked leadership, rarely took pupils' needs into account, and were often of little help (Scott and Thomson 1992). From the influential decades before the 1980s, the LEA seems to have lost considerable power and much of its potential influence.

CHAPTER 2. THE INFLUENCE OF FACTORS NEAR OR WITHIN THE SCHOOL ON SEX EDUCATION.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Factors near or within the school are likely to have significant influence on the sex education decisions the head makes therefore influences from the community which surrounds the school, the families, parents and children are considered in this chapter. Also considered are influences connected with the governors and staff of the school and the concept of whether or not the school has any responsibility to provide sex education. Since it is my view that heads have significant influence over the provision of sex education the decisions they make about its implementation will depend partly on how they perceive the neighbourhood, its families, parents and children, governors and teachers of the school.

Staffing issues are likely to be a significant factor in the sex education decision-making process. Consideration of teachers' roles and responsibilities, their attitudes and perceptions of children's needs, status and training all have implications when considering the ways in which staff-related issues can, and do affect the position of sex education.

The concept of what the school should be responsible for distorts the fact that the responsibility lies with those in the system who have the power and authority to initiate and support what schools do. Some consideration is given to the notion that 'schools have/do not have a responsibility to include sex education' as a commonly held perception, which is often expressed in those terms. Whether certain topics are the proper remit of the school is a factor which influences whether they are included or not.

The head's perceptions of parents' attitudes and responsibilities are important considerations, and the need to consult and cooperate with them over providing sex education will have some influence upon what is decided. How the head views the children will be very significant, and perceptions of their sexual needs, development, rights, skills, behaviour and communication will all have some bearing on what is done.

2.2 LOCAL COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBOURHOOD

Health and sex education benefit the community (U.N.E.S.C.O. 1965; Tomes 1987) and in certain ways the community will have a reciprocal influence on health and sex education. If factors which influence sex education decisions exert stronger pressure the nearer they are felt to the point of delivery I would expect heads to recognise the community as a factor which needs to be considered carefully in any decisions that are made (Coombs and Craft 1987). All the influences discussed so far have been considered as they relate 'in distance' to the point where sex education is delivered, the school. Notions of societal, political, cultural and moral considerations and so on, are necessary in terms of philosophical and theoretical structures for the curriculum, but as with all matters of philosophy and theory, the test comes when one begins to act upon them.

The school neighbourhood has real life pressures which affect and influence the school, and may contain factors which exert a more immediate influence on the decisions heads take. Walters (1979) observed:

" Each school neighbourhood has a conditioning effect; back-grounds influenced by ethnic, social and economic conditions, types of dwelling, the extent of amenities, number of one-parent families, mobility of families, conditions of employment are

likely to impinge on educational, social and personal problems of children."

(Waters 1979).

While Schulz (1968) had earlier questioned whether influence did come from the community, others had often referred to issues in the community which needed consideration. Understanding children's backgrounds (Bjork 1968), having regard for the child's neighbourhood (Wake 1966), appreciating the local needs and special needs (Elias and Gebhard 1969) were, and still are very much central to the work of the school, particularly in regard to sex education (D.E.S. 1981; Went 1985; D.E.S. 1986a; D.E.S. 1987; Concern 1994). It has been advised that schools should be guided in what they can do by the attitudes of their community (Wells-Pestell 1976; Williams 1987).

This will not be without its problems. The need to help pupils solve their problems in the light of their own goals and philosophy, within the context of community goals and values (Schulz 1968; J.U.S.U.E.P. 1987), could be problematic. Equally, the local interpretations of having due regard 'to moral considerations and the value of family life' (D.E.S. 1987; DfE 1994), or developing in children 'an understanding of the range of human sexual attitudes and behaviour' (K.C.C. 1990) will mean different things to different people. There could be a mismatch between the expectations of lofty official prescriptions and local norms and perceptions. Effective sex education has strategies for addressing these matters (Ray and Went 1995), but until those considering implementing sex education get to that point, some neighbourhood factors could have potentially negative effect.

Forming strong links with the community will be fundamental. The important

development of a balanced relationship between the school and community, giving local people a positive role in determining school policy, was in motion in the 1970s (Williams 1977; Bacon 1978), manifesting itself in areas such as cultural, ethnic, minority issues (Wandsworth 1978; Goldman and Goldman 1982; Concern 1994). But community influence may not be neutral or beneficial (Wetton and Moon 1987; Concern 1994; Bradney 1996).

Difficulties arise when the values of the community are not those of the school or when objections to school policy are unreasonably made by a small but influential section of the community. Circumstances arise when the effect of one on the other is detrimental to children's education. It seems likely that circumstances could arise when the issues to be addressed would be whether sex education should be implemented against local opposition; whether it was worth hassle to try to reverse or modify negative pressures; whether a particular moral stance would give offence in current 'double-standardised' society. Situations where....

"....each community and educational institution must determine the role it should play in the area of family life and sex education; only the community and its agencies and institutions can know what is desirable, what is possible, and what is wise for them in this realm."

(Perrin and Smith 1972).

...could be seen as potentially too fraught for heads to support.

Lay pressure groups can demand certain courses of action and veto others (Chance 1935; Bereday 1958; Schulz 1968; Halford 1978; Goldman and Goldman 1982; F.Y.C. 1991). Holt (1965) described the vulnerability of the school to the pressure groups which often respond to things they find inconvenient. Yet community reaction to school policy cannot be ignored (Waters 1979).

Surveys and reports show local support for sex education initiatives (Ripley et al 1971, Fidge 1978; Yarber 1979; Reid 1988). Equally however there are reports where the reverse is true (Allen 1969; Wells-Pestell 1976; Concerned Parents 1980). And where there is no opposition it can be still imagined (Yarber 1979; Williams 1987) and equally inhibiting.

Facilities in the locality could have some tentative influence on sex education, like a library for example, (Newman J. 1978; Speight 1982). Book shops, sex shops, a youth culture, a gay bar, a girlie magazine stall and so on. Such considerations are not as trite as it may seem particularly when children say that some of their sex information comes from 'rude' playing cards, graffiti and sex magazines (Fidge 1978a; Granada 1997; Pinsent and Knight 1997). The sexual messages received in a sleepy Cornish village could be very different from those in the centre of Liverpool, and since factors relating to children, influence sex education decisions, what influences children could be very significant also.

It is likely that heads' sex education decisions will be influenced by the community, their perception of the implications of consulting the community and whether sex education is seen to be of community benefit. Factors concerning children's backgrounds and their vulnerability in society will also be significant. Possible conflict from objections to school policy or imagined opposition could influence decisions reached. There are few formal channels for consultation with the community so most heads perceive community factors through the children, parents, governors or general interaction with the local milieu. Heads are exhorted to consult (DfE 1994), and advice is available (Collyer 1995; Ray and Went 1995).

2.3 SCHOOL GOVERNORS

Up to the 1970s there was little in the literature regarding the involvement of the governors with the curriculum. Banks (1969) found that the 'director' of any curriculum development project would find little interest from the governors, although Manzer (1970) included governors as a factor of influence on the head as he interpreted educational needs and formulated curriculum policy.

In the late 1970s early 1980s there was a growing recognition of the need for governors to become more informed. Golby (1983) emphasised the need for governors to receive adequate training in order to avoid problems over curriculum innovation. Raggatt (1983) predicted the likely increase in non-professional involvement in the curriculum, in the 1980s, leading to situations where, lay approval, through the governors, would be required for curriculum change.

In the late 1970s Kent County Council called for all primary schools to produce statements of their aims and objectives for the whole curriculum (KCC 1978). After heads had produced detailed statements they were then to be discussed with the governors (Petty 1984). This was interpreted by most heads as a requirement to submit the school's agreed statement to the governors. In very few cases were governors involved in discussions to produce the statements (Parsons and Steadman 1984). Since some of these statements had details of the schools' health and sex education policies, it was unlikely that sex education would have had any more consideration by governors at that time than any other aspects of the curriculum.

Although school governors have had a legal status under the Articles of Government for their schools, with responsibilities for the management of the curriculum, before the 1980s this was not perceived to have a very practical application beyond the generalised notion of their oversight of the school.

But there was a growing awareness of accountability:

' The growing emphasis on accountability in the past four years has made our schools in general much more aware of their obligations to explain and justify what they do to parents, governors and the local community.'

(Saunders 1981).

Golby (1983) suggested that action or interest by the governors was more likely to be stimulated when change was obvious:

" Innovation, particularly in the form of curriculum change of a visible or controversial character, is likely to present a test case (i.e. to test how actively the governors will seek to shape the curriculum).... However it is surely likely that prudent head teachers will consult their governing bodies in advance of any such innovation, and here some difficult situations could arise."

(Golby 1983).

KEC (1986) decided to 'encourage' governors to 'take an interest' in the proposed plans for future curriculum development. There was little in the literature to show that governors were taking, or had taken positive steps in curriculum innovation. If anything, governors had been perceived as having a constraining role, and were seen by Rickus and Cooksey et al. (ASC 1986) as being a factor in the external constraints on the school.

Under the Education (No.2) Act 1986 (Section 18) governing bodies were required to consider whether or not to include sex education in the secular

curriculum. Whether they decided to include it or not, they were required to make and keep up to date a written statement either detailing the content and organisation of sex education or the fact that it had been decided not to include it (Para 4. DES 1987). Where sex education was to be provided, head teachers were to ensure that it was carried out in accordance with the governors' policy.

In determining their policy, the governors were to have regard to representations from the local community, the chief officer of police, advice produced by HMI and consult with the head. Section 18(2)(a) of the 1986 Act allowed governors to decide against including sex education in their school's curriculum, but they are reminded by the Secretary of State of the widely accepted view that schools had a responsibility to their pupils to offer at least some sex education (DES 1987: paragraph 7.).

Much advice and guidance produced after the Education (No.2) Act 1986 by the DES, LEAs and other interested sources reminded governors of their responsibilities for sex education (DES 1987; TES 1989; KCC 1989a; 1989b; S.E.F. 1992). Workshop, courses and other ideas to support governors in discharging their responsibilities were produced (e.g. Massey 1988; Sanders and Swinden 1990).

Some governors were reluctant to develop sex education policies (TES 1989; Klien 1992). Concern was expressed that they may not agree to the kind of sex education, teachers and heads felt necessary, and without training were no better than parents in knowing what was best (TES 1992). However, in considering factors which influence what is possible regarding the

implementation of sex education, Massey (1988) listed 'support of Headteacher' in front of 'support of school governors'.

Under the Education Act 1993 sex education was not compulsory for primary pupils, so the situation remained largely as it was before the Act. School governors, in consultation with the head (para 18, DfE 1994), were required to decide if any sex education should be given (para 4. DfE 1994) [other than that included in the National Curriculum].

The Draft Circular (DfE 1993) implied problems in approaching sex education as it began with the sentence...

'1. Sex education is a difficult topic for school governors, teachers, parents and pupils.'

The eventual Circular 5/94 (DfE 1994) said it was expected that the governors would draw upon help and guidance from a number of sources. These included professional advice from the head, LEA advisers, school health authorities and similar bodies, NCC Publications, representatives of the community (paras 18, 19, 46) and parents (paras 28, 46) a position supported in recent publications for governors (Wragg and Partington 1980; Brown A. 1993; Perigo 1993).

The governors of primary schools in the maintained sector were required to have a written policy statement in accordance with Section 241 (5) of the Education Act 1993. Support, advice and help in discharging their duties was readily available (Ray and Went 1994; Collyer 1995).

Governors were reminded to maintain a distinction between determining a policy and the role of the head and staff in delivering the curriculum, according to that policy (para 20). The importance of properly trained governors was emphasised (para 43).

Even with training, it is likely that governors will rely on the advice of the head, so the influence of the head is likely to remain a significant factor in determining policy. The idea that heads have, and expect to have, influence upon the determination of the sex education status of the school, places them in a significant position of influence regarding whether or not it is implemented.

Testing the correlation between the heads' wishes concerning sex education and the governors' statement of the policy for the school will be included in the data collected for this study.

The current powers of governors to appoint staff, determine curriculum statements, control budgets and so on has given them the capability of exercising considerable influence. Their response can still range from disinterest to determined involvement but they are currently in a more influential position than the one they occupied before the 1980s.

2.4 THE TEACHER'S ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY

In primary sex education the class teacher is seen to be the key element, the best person, the person whom the children respect and trust, and therefore the one who should be entrusted with the task (Anaheim 1965; C.A.C.E. 1967; Schulz 1968; Little 1970; Disney 1971). The maxim that the teacher should want to do sex education and not be unwillingly thrust into it was pronounced very early on (Dawe 1935) but sometimes those who would like to, are seemingly not given the opportunity.

" Still there are teachers who would like to teach sex development.They find the problems challenging and the response rewarding. To have gifted persons in a school system and not to make use of them seems almost immoral."

(Wake 1966).

Brewer (1962), warned that failure by teachers to accept their responsibilities would result in serious ignorance among children, but this position overlooks the fact that in other (though not necessarily ideal) ways, children get sex information.

Early in their development, many local authority schemes made provision for unwilling teachers to opt out (Birmingham 1967). Though initially unwilling, some teachers found that with help they were able to undertake sex education work (S.B.C. 1971; Collyer 1995). In surveying attitudes in the early 1970s, some teachers firmly held that sex education was not theirs or the school's responsibility, and that it was unsuitable for class teaching (Fawdry 1971), an attitude still found among some teachers (H.P.A.N.I. 1996).

It had been recognised that where other factors, like the effect of socio-economic status, were considered, teachers had an important role to play in providing sex education (Schofield 1965; Gillham 1997). Reportedly, the socio-economic status of the school neighbourhood affected the teachers' view of their role (Musgrove and Taylor 1965). Teachers' perceptions of children are affected by the child's social class (Mortimore and Mortimore 1986).

In terms of the urban child, it had been argued that the teacher's role must be extended to embrace ever more 'parental' functions and include the skills and interests of social workers (Mays 1965). In relation to sex education, given the reported effects of socio-economic status and neglected parental responsibility upon the process, expectations were raised of the teacher's role, which some teachers did not readily accept. As with other adults, particularly parents, teachers face the same kind of problems in approaching sex education (Goldman and Goldman 1988; Haywood 1996).

There is substantial literature on the failure of parents to sex educate their children. Many teachers who are parents could be in that position. Therefore if the school is to provide sex education where parents do not, teachers who are involved must, overcome their own prejudice, bias, inhibitions, ignorance, tendencies to select what they think children should know, and so on (Dawe 1935; Brewer 1962; Wake 1966; Schulz 1968; Irwin and Spira 1977; Calderone and Johnson 1990; Lenderyou 1993).

The teacher's role involves applying the same standards and educational principles to sex education, as to all other areas of the curriculum (Reiss

1968). Teachers, who are concerned with the development of the personality (Schools Council 1968; Ray and Went 1995), setting good relationship examples to the pupils (Fleming 1963), will be part of the innovative process (Bereday et al 1958; L.C.C. 1964) which anticipates difficulties and makes provision to prepare pupils for maturity (Hall et al 1953; S.B.C. 1971; Goldman and Goldman 1982; 1988). Part of the fulfilment of the role is found where the teachers ensure they have a sound knowledge of their children and their environment, where they analyse their own motives and knowledge and keep fully informed of current developments (Holmes et al 1963; Bjork 1972; Irwin 1977; C.C. 1990).

There was a negative element in the teacher's role of sex educator which was due to the status of sex education in the curriculum. Namely, while many class teachers were prepared to deliver sex education in the classroom, it was a specialism, unlikely to advance the teacher's career prospects and teachers who wished to specialise in sex education were unlikely to secure promotion on that basis. In neither the Warwick Enquiry nor the National Survey was it reported that schools had post-holders with special responsibility for health or sex education (D.E.S. 1978a; D.E.S. 1982a; Campbell 1985). Most posts were for music (Alexander 1984). The withdrawal of Grants for Education Support and Training (G.E.S.T) funding has meant that sex education supported by teacher-advisers no longer exists, affecting the delivery of sex education programmes (Trippe 1994), and the perceived status of sex education in the curriculum. Low health/sex education status affects the teacher's role.

2.5 TEACHERS' ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS

Teachers' attitudes will affect what they teach, and the manner in which they do it. The head will need to take account of attitudes as far as they can be known. The consideration of teachers' attitudes here is to see what effect they might have on sex education and how they might rate as a 'factor of influence' on sex education decisions.

Some teachers have negative attitudes towards sex education. One reason being their claim that sex education is unsuitable for the primary school curriculum (Wake 1966; Fawdry 1971; H.P.A.N.I. 1996). Others are reluctant and unwilling to participate (Gagern 1953; B.C.C. 1966; Wells-Pestell 1976; Farquhar 1990). It has long been obvious to many observers and researchers that some teachers simply 'shrink' from doing it (Huxley 1866; Birmingham 1967; Little 1970; Burke 1970; Fidge 1978b; Farquhar 1990; Scott and Thomson 1992; Green 1994). Staff in these categories are quite clear that they will not undertake sex education.

It is probable that other teachers do not wish to do sex education but advance some kind of condition which would seemingly allow them to do so in particular circumstances. Conditions like, if the children ask, or, only if the children are not getting any sex information at home, or, if they think the materials are suitable (S.B.C. 1971; Whalley 1972; Farrell 1978), are typical of those observed and almost certainly result in those teachers avoiding any involvement in sex education.

Difficulties arising from the teacher's own sexual adjustment or personal sex knowledge (Ottaway 1935; Benell 1969; Gordon 1979; Gamage 1989;

Lenderyou 1993), anxieties or hesitancy in discussing certain sexual topics (Wickman 1928; S.B.C. 1971; Whalley 1972; Goldman and Goldman 1988) and perceiving the implied need, to attempt some kind of influence over children's sexual behaviour (B.C.C. 1966; Gillham 1997), serve to illustrate the complex range of reasons some teachers have, for being unwilling to become involved in sex education. It was reported that teachers like teaching about respect and honesty, but not sexual morality (Grace 1972).

In regard to the B.B.C. initiative in the early 1970s, it was noted that teachers who were hesitant, were re-assured and changed their attitudes after noting the children's responses to the programmes (S.B.C. 1971). It is not clear if that experience was sufficient to cause them to become positive sex educators thereafter.

Bibby (1948) maintained that any difficulties regarding sex education lay in the mind of the adult and not the child, a sentiment expressed elsewhere (S.B.C. 1971; Goldman and Goldman 1988; Gammage 1989; Haywood 1996). Some teachers felt awkward (C.A.C.E. 1967). Others had poor opinions of parents, who were perceived to be inadequate in providing their children with sex education at home, and through their failure, staff felt that they had the responsibility of sex education unfairly thrust upon them (Musgrove 1965; B.C.C. 1966; Farrell 1978).

From Musgrove's (1965) six identified 'commonly accepted aims of education' teachers ranked 'family life education' last in order of importance. The publicised public support for sex education is often not thought by teachers to apply in their home districts (Yarber 1979), and so, earlier

advice still holds good, that teachers who are ill at-ease with sex education should not do it (L.C.C. 1964).

Some teachers thought it a natural aspect of the school curriculum and maintained the school could do better than the parents (Bjork 1972). Sex education was regarded as being of deep concern to teachers (Elles 1976), and student teachers also were in favour of it (Finlayson and Cohen 1967). Other student teachers supported the need for sex education as a result of their own experience, at having not received very much (if any) at school themselves (Whalley 1972). Many surveys of teachers' attitudes illustrate strong support for sex education (N.E.A. 1965; May 1967; Fidge 1978b; Yarber 1979).

Teachers with the fewest misconceptions and most accurate sex knowledge, were most likely to want to teach sex education including controversial areas (Benell 1969). The kind of qualities and attitudes expected in teachers when tackling sex education included, firm conviction and confidence in one's own abilities (Schulz 1968), healthy attitudes, honesty and integrity, a matter-of-factness and lack of embarrassment (Bibby 1948; L.C.C. 1964; Calderone 1968; Edmonds 1968; Calderone and Johnson 1990).

A popular view of some teachers was expressed thus:

".....then came the new breed of avant garde teachers who take the view 'Catch them young, before the age of puberty, and before they start to feel any natural instincts'....To me this approach is both pathetic and wholly wrong. ∴ It is not the qualifications that the teacher has that matters, but the character of the teacherof course there must be sex instruction, but it is the type of sex instruction which matters.I venture to suggest that what we need is fewer 'experts' and more teachers with that wonderful gift of common sense."

(Ferrers 1976).

Such opinions are quite commonly held and suggest the notion of a section of teachers who are potentially harmful or dangerous. This might be seen in the advice that 'teachers who feel an undue interest in sex instruction... are not suitable to give it' (L.C.C. 1964; see also: Went 1985). The fundamental principle of informed teaching arising from an interest in the subject is not apparently universal. Irwin and Spira (1977), referred to the difficulties that arose from the kind of constraints teachers perceived:

" And when moral issues arise, can he [the teacher] dispassionately help the pupil make his own judgements rather than leave him in a limbo between natural desires and incomprehensible prescriptions from dubious moral authorities ? How many sex education-
alists would see it as part of their job to maximise the pupils' capacity to conduct and enjoy as wide a range of sexual activity as is compatible with the needs, feelings and interests of other people ? Very few we suspect in our uneasy and confused society."
(Irwin and Spira 1977)

Positive attitudes are sometimes seen as permissive, and this produces a difficulty for teachers of sex education. Positive and supportive teachers' attitudes are very important in sex education (Crawford 1978; Farquhar 1990). But the problems that older teachers were said to have towards change (B.C.C. 1966; C.A.C.E. 1967), the resistance of those to undertake sex education but rather advocated that it be taught by outside 'specialists' (Greaves 1965), and embarrassed, anxious, emotionally unbalanced teachers with poor sex education attitudes (Segal 1962; Mills 1992; Scott and Thompson 1992), gave heads serious barriers to overcome if they wished to implement sex education. Alternatively such difficulties may have been seen by some heads as reasons for not attempting to do so.

Teachers' values and opinions are easily and often unwittingly transmitted through sex education (Farrell 1978; Scott and Thomson 1992). Factors

relating to teachers' attitudes were reported to be the main problem concerning difficulties in the introduction of sex education (Manley 1964; Chanter 1966; Farquhar 1990). Goodman (1967) quoted a teacher, who reflected Bibby's (1948) claim above:

" I had to admit to myself that the trouble in teaching reproduction was not with the children, my main stumbling block was my own conditioning."

(Goodman 1967)

It would be understandable, to see heads as neutral agents, standing back from this complex network of issues, determining simply, what was the best management strategy to adopt, to achieve their aims of either including sex education, or not, but this would overlook the fact, that heads, once teachers themselves, may have the same attitudes.

2.6 TEACHER TRAINING

The question of appropriate training and the qualities of teachers delivering sex education are considered in this section and the influence these issues could have on sex education decisions. Few teachers would have had sex education training and many teachers taking sex education in primary schools will be doing the best they can by applying their professional skills. For those teachers who have received further professional development it would have been through In-Service-Training initiatives (Ray and Went 1995) but health and sex education courses, have not been very numerous, or well-attended (Fidge 1978b) only 25% of teachers in one area were reported to have attended a health education course since 1990 (Trippe 1994). The lack of trained staff is one of the basic reasons given for not being able to develop sex education programmes (Scott and Thomson 1992; Trippe 1994).

The importance of training, is a fundamental long established principle (Van Gelderen 1935; U.N.E.S.C.O. 1965; C.A.C.E. 1967; Schulz 1968; Aberdeen 1969; Bjork 1972; Wells-Pestell 1976; Ashton 1982; Massey 1990; Scott and Thomson 1992; Concern 1994; Ray and Went 1995). Much training advice is long established. The training provision must be twofold, initial teacher training and In-Service courses. The B.C.C. (1966) envisaged training on secondment which led to a recognised qualification. A continuous INSET programme was needed (Edwards 1967). Few training institutions had sex education courses as part of the basic training (Malfetti and Rubin 1968; Greaves 1964; Gaitskell 1976; Ray and Went 1995). But in spite of the lack of training it is implicit in recent advice and the interpretation of the legislation that support and training is seen as an integral element in the provision of sex education (DFE 1987; DfE 1994).

In the mid 1950s the Ministry of Education (1956) recognised the need of personal education for student teachers. This was later backed up by the Plowden recommendations (C.A.C.E. 1967). Student teachers whose own sex education was unsatisfactory felt the need to learn more and valued the college courses provided (Whalley 1972).

Those responsible for finding qualified staff anticipated difficulties (Manley 1964) particularly as sex education was influenced by the suitability and training of staff (L.C.C. 1964) and inadequately prepared staff would inhibit it (Johnson and Schutt 1966; Trippe 1994). Only a minority of teachers felt they had sufficient training for sex education (Sjovall 1970; Massey 1988). Without training staff were diffident (Wadia 1970). Training helped to correct sex-related misconceptions (Benell

1969). Teachers' courses were appreciated by teachers who rated them as very helpful (H.E.C. 1972). Sjovali (1970) reported that it was the poor initial preparation of teachers for sex education in Sweden (c1957) that resulted in the handbook produced for the work, being rated as old fashioned, moralising and inappropriate. Training is a priority (Massey 1990). Teachers must be trained if the targets in The Health of the Nation (1986) are to be met (Concern 1994)

The danger of using untrained staff has been stated (Iseman 1968; Burke 1970), and

"...an untrained teacher is only some other child's parent, and expecting some magic mantle of wisdom and clarity to descend upon him as he enters the classroom is wishful thinking."
(Iseman 1968).

In addition to training certain qualities or characteristics have been cited as ideal for those who would deliver sex education. Some of these qualities might be found naturally in certain teachers, and others are no doubt trainable. Stating these qualities goes well back in the literature. Some examples of the qualities expected in teachers taking sex education between the 1930s to the mid 1970s are given below:

For example, sex educating teachers should... have gained personal sex adjustment (Bibby 1948)... have no prurient tendency to discuss sex to excess (Bibby 1948)... feel able to help children (Menzies 1971)... have a strong personality (Assn. of Headmistresses 1968)... be aware of one's own misconceptions (Benell 1969)... be alive and responsive to sex (Chance

1935)... be sexually experienced (Masters and Johnson 1968)... be honest (Bibby 1948)...

.....and above all - be trained (Van Gelderen 1935; U.N.E.S.C.O. 1965; C.A.C.E. 1967; Schulz 1968; Aberdeen 1969; Bjork 1972; Wells-Pestell 1976).

The character not qualifications is important (Ferrers 1976). Official advice was that care should be taken in choosing suitable teachers to do sex education (D.E.S. 1966). More recent advice has shown that these earlier qualities, rather than being old-fashioned or out of date, differ little to those expected now.

Went (1985) advised:

" The choice of members of staff is central to the success of any sex education programme. It is the personality of the teacher chosen however, rather than their main subject area or responsibilities, which is all important. The selection of suitable teachers should be considered so critical that their availability takes priority over other curriculum restraints...

No member of staff should be pressurised into taking part in sex education work if not fully prepared to do so....

This brings us to the question of 'over enthusiastic' volunteers for this work. Such people should be viewed with suspicion, as their motives may be questionable."

(Went 1985).

Additionally, sex educators need: ...genuine sincere concern for others.

..acceptance of their own and other's sexuality. ...sensitivity and respect. ..professional skills. ..protect children from exploitation. ..communication skills (Wagner 1985).

Sex educators must be able to accept challenges to their values, attitudes

and taboos (Sanders and Swinden 1990), and to be prepared to examine their personal motives, in terms of what they hope to achieve from being involved in sex education both for themselves and others (Clarity Collective 1989).

It is self evident that the ability to promote effective sex education programmes will be greatly influenced by the availability of fully trained staff with the required personal qualities.

2.7 TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING OF CHILDREN'S SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

Until teachers recognise and understand a need they cannot begin to meet it. Even if the need is known, it does not follow that the solutions to meet that need are within the province of the teacher. Introducing sex education implies a need for it yet it is still not universally found in our primary schools in spite of the significant support since the mid 1940s (Bibby 1948; Chesser and Dawe 1945; Dawkins 1967; Kenner 1970; Hemming and Maxwell 1975; Fidge 1978; DES 1986; Went 1988; NCC 1990a; DfE 1994).

In seeking explanations for this it is probable that teachers' understanding of children's sexual development, plays some part in whether they are individually convinced a need exists and should be met. Two factors emerge from this. Firstly, what individual class teachers know and believe affects what they teach and want to teach. Secondly the head, once an ordinary teacher, brings to his role those understandings of the children formed in the classroom (though possibly modified through his new role) which will be instrumental in continuing to influence his decisions.

What teachers know and think about childhood sexuality could therefore be of importance in identifying 'factors of influence' which act upon a head.

There is support in the literature, for the principle that teachers should know about children's sexual development (Bibby 1948, 1951; Dawkins 1967; Honey 1978; Massey 1988; Collyer 1995) but there is no adequate provision for this in basic, or in-service training (Massey 1988). If teachers lack the knowledge they cannot do a good job (Honey 1978). Understanding all aspects of sexual development from physiological through to the sociological notions of gender role behaviour, are necessary (Kirkendall and Miles 1968). It has long been realised that the lack of understanding of developmental differences by teachers causes difficulties for children (Gallagher 1955). It was shown that teachers' awareness of sex-related problems influenced decisions on sex education (Yarber 1979).

Adults are frequently surprised at the extent of children's sexual knowledge (Goldman and Goldman 1988; Collyer 1995). Reluctance from staff for sex education is often overcome when the extent of children's knowledge becomes apparent (Chanter 1966; Schulz 1968; S.B.C. 1971; Kenner 1973). Chanter (1966), observed that there was a lot of misunderstanding about children's sexual development. Kirkendall and Miles (1968) drew attention to the need for sex educators to understand more fully the nature of sex-role expectations and behaviours as part of the wider issues of family life and sex education.

In many studies of children's sources of sex information, teachers are shown to rank low as an information source (Schofield 1973; Fidge 1978a;

Gillham 1997). This is reflected in the information sources for student teachers, who said their teachers were not prime sources of sex information (Whalley 1972; see also Fidge 1978a; Farrell 1978).

Most teachers will have had some course work on child development in their training, but it has been observed that there are omissions of children's sexuality in many studies of child development, prompting a possible explanation why many teachers still entertain notions of children's asexuality (Goldman and Goldman 1982). In some quarters it is thought that children's sexual curiosity is stimulated by their biological maturation. If teachers hold this view it would help to explain the general tendency to leave the introduction of sex education until the onset of adolescence (Goldman and Goldman 1982; Sanders and Swinden 1990). It follows then that the age at which one says sex education should begin is an indication of the speaker's perception of the sexual nature of the child.

Talking with children enhances a teacher's understanding of their sexuality and developing good trusting relationships with the pupils (Dawe 1935; Chanter 1966; A.C.E. 1991; Ray and Went 1995) is often achieved through the techniques of open discussion.

" Teachers are needed who will accept both the pupils and their ideas and who are trained in non-directive techniques, enabling them to cope with open, free, class discussions." (Keller 1959).

The fact that children will and do talk to an adult about sex is an indication of the trust they have in the adult. Where sex education was given children found sex-related talk easier (S.B.C. 1971). Reports of

being bombarded by questions (S.B.C. 1971) following a television sex education series showed the need for teachers who could handle that situation. The observation, that children prefer to ask any adult about sex except their parents (Bibby 1948; S.B.C. 1971) supports the notion that teachers might properly fill this role and illustrates the maxim that parents can be poor at sex educating their children. But the other adult might not be a teacher as many will not take sex education and many schools do not include sex education (Scott and Thomson 1992; Concern 1994).

I would suggest that statements made by some teachers that they have never been asked sex questions throughout their careers has more to do with the imperceptible messages they give out about their attitudes to sex-related information, than the fact that children do not want to ask questions. Children are quick to spot those who are uncomfortable about sex matters (Went 1985) and will ask someone else. Honey (1978) suggested that the barriers to communication may be greater between a teacher and the class in sex education than in any other subject. Communication is fundamental to sex education:

" Probably the most important contribution which an adult can make to the child's healthy understanding of sex, is to re-establish communications - make it clear that it is permissible to discuss sex with adults."

(Dawkins 1967).

From the 1930s it was reported that:

" There is an intellectual atmosphere of discussion, criticism and frankness, which makes an approach to a subject like sex (usually taboo in schools), not difficult or embarrassing."

(Ottaway 1935).

It is noteworthy that one of the reasons Ottaway gave for this candid situation was that the staff and boys swam naked in the river, and sun-bathed (a strategy unlikely to be used in most primary schools these days).

In communicating, teachers need to be aware of the differences in information and experience that exist between children (Went 1988a). This will be reflected in their talk and range of vocabulary (Elias and Gebhard 1969; Fidge 1978a; Massey 1988; Collyer 1995). Answers to children's questions must be straightforward and honest (Steinhaus 1965).

In terms of understanding children's sexual development the concept of 'readiness' may not be as helpful as it is said to be in other areas of the curriculum (Scott and Thomson 1992). It has long been suggested that it is unwise to wait until the child is 'ready':

" Subject readiness is the moment of maturation when children can deal with a particular fact or principle. But such a notion does mean that a parent/teacher should passively wait for the right moment. Wise parents/teachers will see the need to establish a dialogue to anticipate the next stage and provide appropriate experience or information to facilitate development."

(B.C.C. 1966).

In the literature there is very little on the teachers' understanding of children's sexual development. This could be that a basic assumption is made, that teachers have an understanding of all areas of the child's development; and that this includes a child's sexual development. I think that the teachers' understanding of children's sexuality and sexual development is a key factor in whether they support sex education or not. For that reason there is a need to investigate teachers' understanding of children's sexuality and related issues, because our understanding of this issue is incomplete.

2.8 SEX EDUCATION AS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SCHOOL

Heads' views on whether they regard sex education to be the responsibility of the school will influence their decisions about implementation. This section considers the matter of the school's responsibility, the issues involved, and the various factors which need to be taken into account.

Neill (1916) recounted that any mention of sex in the state schools would have brought instant dismissal. He expressed his conviction however that if he had the opportunity in his own private school, to run as he pleased, he would certainly introduce sex into his scheme of education. Though some sex education was being introduced in the 1920s and 30s (F.P.S.I. 1935), attempts to remove the 'mysterious silence' were still being made in the 1950s:

" We are bound to realise that the old ostrich-like policy of maintaining a mysterious silence about all that appertains to sex can no longer be defended by responsible educators."

(Gagern 1953).

Schools were being urged not to miss opportunities for sex education when it was needed (C.E.B.E. 1964), and of the appropriateness of health and sex education in primary and infant schools (U.N.E.S.C.O. 1967). Sex education was seen as a proper subject for educational debate, with growing agreement for it to be put on the curriculum (Little 1970). It was said that young people were asking for knowledge and educators had a 'duty' to give sex education to help them make the best of their lives (Menzies 1971).

The introduction of sex education into schools was to be encouraged (Gagnon and Simon 1973), and claims were being made that the case for it in schools was proven (Crowther-Hunt 1976). But uncertainty was reflected in Farrell's (1978) comment:

" If schools are to take on the responsibility for sex education it needs to be done at an earlier age (i.e. in primary school)."

Yarber (1979), saw the main responsibility of schools, not as whether to include sex education or not, but to determine what was possible, in terms of sex education content, for their schools. So the stated role for the school, in accepting some responsibility for sex education (C.E.B.E. 1964), made decades ago, is still being proclaimed now (Sanders and Swindon 1990). The reasons for arguing that the school had a role in providing sex education are long-standing and varied, and include, for example:

- a) To provide factual and moral balance to information children pick up from the media (L.C.C. 1964).
- b) Simply because the school is the place where the children are (Manley 1964).
- c) Sex education is far too important to leave to the parents (Wake 1966).
- d) To make good the deficiencies of the children's backgrounds and emotional deprivation (Plowden 1967).
- e) Because sex information needs handling in an objective and unbiased way (Schulz 1968).
- f) The school is a wholesome source of information (Furlong 1967).
- g) It has been given the role of trustworthy information provider (Calderone 1968).
- h) The school's objectives are very close to those of the home (Bassett 1970).
- i) The school's role in anticipating and meeting children's curiosity (Hemming 1971a).
- j) All have access to the educational system as a main source of information (Rogers 1978).
- k) The school has the responsibility to help children find their way about the modern world (Lawton 1978).
- l) Schools exist to serve children, and through them their families and society (Davies 1987).
- m) To prepare children for adulthood (Smith B. 1987).

- n) Primary schools have a major role to play (Went 1989).
- o) The school has an increasingly important role in the sexual education of the young (Wellings et al. 1995).

Possibly the most common factor in arguing the case for schools to include sex education is the failure of parents to sex educate their children adequately, if at all. The head's attitude to this could constitute a factor of influence in sex education decisions.

" Although there exists a widespread recognition that parents have a prior responsibility to give this knowledge, it is evident that a substantial proportion do not in fact do so, and many schools have felt it their duty, therefore, to undertake the very important task of making good the inadequate and distorted knowledge possessed by many children."

(Board of Education 1943).

There is overwhelming support from the literature of the claim that parents fail to sex educate their children (e.g. Chance 1935; Board of Education 1943; Gager 1953; Leeson and Stein 1964; L.C.C. 1964; Schofield 1965; Hector 1966; Wake 1966; Swedish Board of Education 1968; Edmonds 1968; Rodhe 1972; C.M.A.C. 1973; Elles 1976; Fidge 1978; B.B.C.2 1982; Goldman and Goldman 1988; Gammage 1989).

" It is not a question of either the school or the parents but rather of the school complementing the work of the home and not acting as a substitute. Frequently however the home cannot supply what is necessary and rather than leave a gap in the growing child's education, then it is the duty of the school - because it is concerned with the whole child - to supply what is lacking.
(Catholic Marriage Advisory Council 1973).

The ideal of the home as the rightful appropriate place for sex education often prefaces the statement of the reality, that this is rarely achieved, but it is the head's response to this situation that will probably affect the the decision concerning the inclusion of sex education, or not.

Another 'ideal' of every school having a sex education policy is also a long-standing concept (C.A.C.E. 1967; Little 1970) as yet unrealised. Even though it is a legal requirement for all schools (DfE 1994) to have a published sex education policy, it can still be a policy of having no sex education. The pressures of the publicity of the required statement, tend to encourage forms of words in some schools, where a seemingly supportive policy statement infers some kind of support of children's sexual information needs but probably fails to deliver any.

' Sex education is not a structured part of the school curriculum but teachers will respond to children's questions with honest answers appropriate to their age and maturity. ...'
(St Saviour's C.P.S. 1997)

It was said that schools cannot replace the parental role, but complement and supplement it (Calderone 1968). The C.M.A.C. (1973) alluded to a shared responsibility for sex education between parents and school which is technically difficult if either the parents or the school fail to provide sex education. There is a strong belief in this combination which contains ambivalent elements, given the known inability of parents to sex educate (Fidge 1978) and the evident failure by some schools (Gammage 1989; Massey 1990; Scott and Thomson 1992). Bjork (1972) reported that both parents and teachers thought it natural for the school to have sex education and felt that the school could do a better job than the home. The Bishop of Chelmsford (1976), said that it was right that parents could look to the schools to share the responsibility of sex education with them. Few disputed the fact that parents had the chief responsibility for sex education but that did not absolve the schools from including it (D.E.S. 1977).

One of the main objections to the B.B.C's initiative in sex education was that schools would usurp the rights of parents (S.B.C. 1971), a finding similar to that of Farrell (1978), that schools have been reluctant to become involved in sex education because they believed sex education to be the parents' province. The concept of usurping or trespassing on the rights of parents could be a factor in deciding not to include sex education.

Fawdry (1971), reported that many teachers thought sex education was not the school's job, and Schofield (1973) found that many people felt the school was not the right place for sex education.

Whether the school is the right place or not, there is some support in the literature that the schools are failing. In some cases the failure claim is in terms of failing children by not having any sex education (Kimborough 1966):

" Historically most schools...have carried out the business of educating the young, as though sex did not exist."

(Schulz 1968).

The issue was seen, not over whether youth would get sex education or not, but whether it would come from the mass media and peer groups or from effective participation by the schools (Kirkendall and Miles 1968). Schools were urged to consider this matter more (Chazan 1968). Not only were some school programmes rated as inadequate (Whalley 1972; Yarber 1979), but parents were realising that schools were not fulfilling their role (Farrell 1978).

" Many Infant and Junior schools are fully awake to the importance of a total, satisfying emotional experience at every age, but not all are sufficiently alert to bring swift help to children who are already falling behind in personal and social development."
(Hemming 1971a).

Hemming (1971a), continued by saying that the school's responsibility went beyond acceptance, it had the role to offset the disproportionate communication of sex in our society.

Many factors bear on the head's perceptions of whether or not the school has a responsibility for sex education; his perception of the appropriateness of sex education in primary schools, the idea that sex education fits in with the accepted primary aims, his perception of the school's partnership with parents or the concept that it is a duty for the school to compensate for their inadequacy, are among those factors which could influence his decisions.

2.9 PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Many factors of influence derive from parents directly and as a result of heads' perceptions of them. Parents are a powerful factor in shaping the ways schools develop. Influence derives from individuals and parents collectively through their role as parents of the school, as members of governing bodies, parent/teacher associations, working parties etc.

A fundamental responsibility parents perceive themselves to have, is to sex educate their children, a perception shared by teachers and children. This important role has been long recognised (Cheshire 1958) as a responsibility to be considered seriously (Flemming 1963). They have that initial duty and responsibility placed on them by virtue of their status (Bibby 1948;

Cheshire 1965; Chanter 1966; Plowden 1967; D.E.S. 1977; N.C.W.G.B. 1984; Allen 1987).

Parents are declared to be 'ideal', 'the best' (Wake 1966; Lancashire 1966; Farrell 1978), but often a rider is added to the effect that this is not the reality of the situation (Wake 1966; Plowden 1967; Edmonds 1968; Fidge 1978). Wake (1966) notes an aspect of their role at which they are best:

" For many parents, ...the best role is not the communication of facts about sex but the communication of attitudes about these facts."

Parents who answer questions honestly are seen to be good sex educators (Elles 1976), but it is not realistic to expect all parents to be able to give sex education (Rogers 1974). Whether parents actively tell their children or not, their non-verbal forms of communication, or what is inferred by their non-communication, provide some kind of sex education, albeit very negative. Their position as 'home-based' sex educators is confirmed, ex officio, 'whether they like it or not' (Goldman and Goldman 1982).

While recognising sex education as a function of parents, the opinion has been expressed that they are the last people who should do it (Wells-Pestell 1976). Certainly the proportion of children who receive no sex education at home is high (David and Wise 1987).

" In spite of the feeling constantly being expressed that parents are the 'best' people to teach their children about sex, this chapter (re. parents' knowledge, children's opinions, the current situation etc. RF.) throws some doubt on whether this is necessarily and always the case. Not enough thought has been given to the problems faced by both parents and children in this area."

(Farrell 1978).

There are important consequences and considerations whatever view the head takes of the parent's responsibility. Decisions made by the heads will depend on whether they see parents as having total responsibility, a need for some help or support in fulfilling this responsibility, the wish to enter a co-operative partnership with the school, or no desire to have anything to do with sex educating their children.

" The debate as to whether the sex education of children is the sole responsibility of the parents has been a long and tortuous one. One could argue that even if the proposition were desirable it is not feasible, for young people are exposed to influences beyond the home over which parents have little or no control."
(David and Wise 1987).

The ambivalence of the parent's position at the turn of the century (Lyttleton 1900), is still apparent now (Brewer 1962; Gagnon and Simon 1973; Farrell 1978; Allen 1987; Went 1994; Granada 1997), and the seriousness with which the parent's responsibility should be viewed is brought into question:

" Although when they were asked who should tell young people (about sex RF) nearly all the parents (90%) said that parents should be involved in telling their children about sex, far fewer felt that parental telling was the best way to learn (34%). Add to this the information that half of them had never discussed babies or sex with their own children, and we can see the extent of parental ambivalence on the subject."
(Farrell 1978).

For decades the responsibility of the parents in these matters has been recognised (Board of Education 1943) and stated both by the parents themselves and other observers and always with the claim of failure on the part of the majority of parents (Gamage 1989).

Parents were reported being concerned to relieve children's anxieties but were not competent to do so (Rigby 1962). They saw the importance of sex education, but avoided it, but with other issues such as religion, parents did not hesitate to tell their children (Reiss 1968). It seems that even religious parents are hard put to follow the concepts of advice from the churches to deal with sex matters with honesty and integrity (Calderone 1968).

The situation is simply summed up, '...parents should, but they don't' (Newcastle 1968; Braestrup 1970; S,B,C, 1971; Gill and others 1971; Farrell 1978; Fidge 1978). Parents' failure is well and long reported. Teachers reported almost total non-sex education at home (Chance 1935), parents were seen as unfit (Van Gelderen 1935), helpless (Gagern 1953), inadequate (Burchinal 1960), and this failure resulted in serious ignorance in children (Brewer 1962). Children were not getting the help they needed (C.E.B.E. 1964) from parents who shirked their duty and left children to find out for themselves (Pickering 1965).

While it was not realistic to expect all parents to sex educate (U.N.E.S.C.O. 1965), many were not doing their job (Anaheim 1965; Kimborough 1966) as they were reluctant to talk about sex (Eppell and Eppell 1966; Bridgerman 1996). Most 'don't, won't or can't' (L.C.C. 1964; Whalley 1972; Crowther-Hunt 1976; Gaitskell 1976; Farrell 1978 Fidge 1978) and they need help (B.C.C. 1966).

" The practical outcome in terms of the training process is that parents expect children to obey the principles of modesty, while at the same time they object to making those principles explicit. Over and above this, for large numbers of parents in our culture failure to communicate goes much deeper, in that they feel a positive

embarrassment about discussing with their children any aspect of sex."
(Newson and Newson 1968).

It was said that for most parents it was easier for them to tell other people's children rather than their own (Gaitskell 1976), but one wonders in what circumstances such instruction could come about. Iseman (1968) pointed out that parents, who were teachers were just as likely to fail in school.

Not only is it argued that parental failure places a responsibility on the school, it also results in disadvantage for the children (Wedel 1966; S.B.C. 1971; Ruthven 1976; Farrell 1978; Fidge 1978a).

" The younger generation emphatically reject the idea that it is best to pick it up from friends, and it is reasonable to assume that they found out about sex in this way because we adults did not provide a better method before their curiosity was aroused."
(Schofield 1973).

The school's responsibility in the face of parental failure and the needs of the children which arise from this failure might both be seen as bringing pressure which could affect and influence heads' decisions.

A whole host of reasons appear in the literature to account for parental failure. They fall into seven categories.

1. Emotional: e.g. They fail because they are uneasy/anxious (Rigby 1962; Gammage 1989).
2. Communication: e.g. They fail because they 'filter' what they tell the children (Fidge 1978).
3. Personal: e.g. They fail because they are inhibited by their own upbringing (H.E.C. 1972).
4. Responsibility: e.g. They fail because they wait till it's too late (Board of Education 1943).
5. Educating: e.g. They fail because they cannot pitch at child's cognitive level (Fidge 1978).
6. Perception: e.g. They fail because they wrongly anticipate

- difficulties (Fidge 1978).
7. Situational: e.g. They fail because they are unprepared to deal with questions which occur in the wrong situation (Vent 1985).

While it has been reported that parents are able to manage a very simple form of sex education for young children, this ability diminishes considerably as the child gets older (Shipman 1968; Rodhe 1971; Balding 1994).

A possible explanation could be:

" For parents to take on the serious responsibility of the sex education of their children.....would immediately involve having to present a sense of their own sexuality to their children and, at the same time, admit to themselves the sexual nature of their children. For the majority of adults it is difficult to conceive of a way in which this could be done without provoking the most profound ambivalences on the part of the child, and equally profound anxieties on the part of the parent."

(Gagnon and Simon 1973).

Farrell (1978) reported that parents saw their responsibilities differently depending on the sex of their children, but in the light of the discharge of their responsibilities this may not be very significant. As long ago as 1900 fathers were reported very unwilling to talk to their sons (Lyttleton 1900). Mothers were seen generally to be more likely to sex educate. (Jilani 1970; Farrell 1978; Fidge 1978; Balding 1994), and Shipman (1968) had earlier reported that, sex education was negligible in, father/son, father/daughter and mother/son relationships. Only in the mother/daughter combination was sex education seen to occur in any significant amount.

In a survey of parents' and teachers' attitudes towards sex education in the late 1930s it was found that fathers regarded sex education to be the responsibility of the mothers, while the mothers considered it the role of the teachers, and the vast majority of teachers wanted the work done by outside specialists (Tucker and Pout 1937). There could still be considerable support for that situation. Most children say they should be told both by their parents and at school (Fidge 1978a; Allen 1987). In Allen (1987), the hope was expressed by children that fathers would take a more active part in their sex education.

The irresponsibility of parents' failure with the implied moral/physical dangers which could result (Powers and Baskin 1969), and such anecdotal evidence, as that of a pregnant thirteen year old whose mother regarded her too young for the facts of life (Hinrichs and Kaplan 1966) and the deliberate misinformation given to children (S.B.C. 1971) strengthen the case for school sex education.

Restoring a balance or correcting misinformation are legitimate aims of school-based sex education. Such aims, which, in the main, originate from parental failure, influence the development of sex education.

The concept of 'parents fail so schools must provide' is supported in the literature:

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Kimmins (1933). | Parents think the school should do it. |
| Hyett (1935). | If parents don't schools should. |
| Gagern (1953). | If, due to discord or parents' own sex problems, they do not sex educate, teacher should (or priest or doctor). |
| (L.C.C. 1964). | Parents neglect duties, schools must be prepared to help. |
| Hector (1966). | Schools must offer support. |
| Goodman (1967). | Parents troubled by own inability are asking schools |

| | |
|------------------|--|
| | to do it. |
| Jilani (1970). | If parents don't schools must. |
| C.M.A.C. (1973). | Parents cannot supply sex education, school must. |
| Goldman and | Schools support inadequate parents. |
| Goldman (1982). | |
| Went (1994) | Schools help parents develop the necessary skills many say they do not have. |

The C.E.B.E. (1964), offered some comfort to failing parents by suggesting that if they were failing, they in turn were being failed by society.

A final comment on the position concerning the responsibility of parents to sex educate might be fairly summed up by this young person's observation:

" If we had to rely upon our parents to educate us about sex, most of us would still be waiting."

(Schofield 1973).

Not many parents fulfil the obligations placed upon them by this perceived responsibility. The fact that many of them fail is generally stated with a qualifying rider. These riders fall into five categories:

- 1). 'Because' category; e.g. Parents fail because.....
- 2). 'Schools Must' category; e.g. Parents fail so schools must provide.
- 3). 'Fact of Life' category; e.g. That parents fail is a fact of life.
- 4). 'Need Help' category; e.g. Parents fail, they need help.
- 5). 'Unaware' category; e.g. Parents fail and are unaware of it.

When asked who should be responsible for children's sex education, most parents state it should be a joint responsibility of themselves and the school (Fidge 1978). This joint responsibility is a difficult concept to pin down (David and Wise 1987). It is likely to be unbalanced, with the parents playing a minor role, where the school has sex education. Where the school has no sex education the partnership cannot exist, and similarly

where the parents provide no sex education, though their lack of provision does not require a public statement to that effect.

Home and school working together were said to produce the 'best' results (Hector 1966). Seeking parental support before embarking on a sex education programme has frequently been advised, with a support level of 80% plus, being suggested as a minimum level at which to proceed, and where this was not evident, it was recommended that the 'school officials need to do more groundwork and further education of parents before initiating a program' (Miller and Schiller 1977). An insufficient level of support was not seen as a reason for not implementing sex education.

The concept of involving parents in consultation and partnership in developing and delivering sex education is longstanding (HMI 1986; DfE 1994; Ray and Went 1995). Schools and parents were identified as sharing a responsibility for discussing health matters with young people and meeting these needs (Cheshire 1958; 1965; Anaheim 1965). The role of the school was changing to form a cooperative agency involving the home (and church) in sex education matters (Edwards 1967). The current wisdom is to include parents as fully as possible (DfE 1994; Ray and Went 1995), but this cooperative concept is still surrounded by ambivalence (Trippe 1994).

The head's response to 'parents should but they don't' will lead to consideration of 'parents fail so schools must/should provide', which follows on to 'school's provision will be in terms of a cooperative venture with parents'. Three further considerations of the influences which shape heads' sex education decisions.

2.10 PARENTAL ATTITUDES

Parents' attitudes influence what they think about their children's education and the degree of support or opposition that might be forthcoming. Heads are responsive to parents' attitudes, though heads' perceptions of what parents think or want, do not necessarily reflect the true position, and heads may take action on their perceived understanding of parental attitudes, which are based on false premises. In this section parental attitudes to sex education are examined to see if they might influence heads' sex education decisions.

Teachers are concerned about the views of parents (Went 1985), and these views can influence the school. Parents' views influence their children, who in turn influence what happens in school. The fear of upsetting parents is very disconcerting and can be very exaggerated (Went 1985), and teachers are not going to undertake matters which might cause conflict.

Children are influenced both by what parents say and do (Calderone and Johnson 1990). A major area of negative influence comes from the silence, inaccuracy, prudery and dishonesty about sex matters which bewilders the young (Brewer 1962; Goldman and Goldman 1988), and which often causes negative attitudes to sex that schools find difficult to correct.

Although the gooseberry bush and stork were said to have been discarded (Board of Education 1943) years ago, there are still many parents unwilling to tell the unrestricted truth to their children (Fidge 1978; 1978a). Brewer (1962) suggested that the birds and the bees were nearer the truth than gooseberry bushes. But the use of the birds and bees ploy reflects

adult attitudes towards sex which seem to need a 'cushion' to soften the reality of human sexuality and somehow make it more acceptable to children.

Some heads reflect this attitude in their replies to the 'What do Heads Mean by Sex Education ?' survey (see chapter 4), as they included certain natural/animal themes in their definitions. I believe children do not need this 'soft' introduction to human sexuality studies, and I would argue that it does not serve any useful purpose in providing a 'nicer' way of introducing sex studies, except insofar as it might make it easier for the adult concerned. Many parents and teachers do not understand this issue.

Parental attitudes are very important (Crawford 1978) and have an influence on a child's sexual understanding, especially during the first 10 years of life (Calderone 1966; Calderone and Johnson 1990). Parents cannot avoid influencing that aspect of sex education which relates to 'the child's outlook on life' (Bibby 1948). Parents pass on values and attitudes which affect their child's sexual and moral development (Reiss 1968; Tones 1987).

"...parental attitudes to sex and sexual matters will be an important factor in the development of their children's attitudes."
(Farrell 1978).

But parents need to take care not to project their own difficulties onto children (Rigby 1962). An emotionally unbalanced adult with poor sex education attitudes is likely to adversely affect children (Segal 1962). Any neuroses adults might have can be communicated to children and affect their attitudes (Fawdry 1971). 40% of women adversely affected by their upbringing, were determined not to bring up their own children in the same way (Womans Own 1978). Referring to parents in general, the same

sentiment had been reported earlier (Goodman 1967), and this could have implications both for parents' resolve to sex educate their children or to see that it is achieved through the schools.

Parents' attitudes to sexual matters are demonstrated by the way they deal with specific areas. The order in which they impart sexual facts reflects their perceptions of the meanings they have of sex (Farrell 1978). For example, fewer parents punish children for masturbating, but fewer still encourage it (Elias and Gebhard 1969). Many parents still emphasise 'warning' aspects of sex and are enthusiastic to tell about STDs etc., as a useful strategy to back up the warnings and discourage children's sexual activity (Farrell 1978). These attitudes may run counter to those reflected in school policy and could be a source of disagreement between some parents and the school (Reiss 1995; Bradney 1996). A head's awareness of this could influence his action.

Parents recognise that sex knowledge is crucial information for children (Goodman 1967). Many parents are worried about lowering moral values and corrupting influences from society (Ripley et al 1971). Sex education is of deep concern to the parents (Elles 1976) but many do not know whether their children are receiving sex education or not (Fidge 1978; Farrell 1978; H.P.A.N.I. 1996)). Most parents want school-based sex education (Fidge 1978). Parents, worried about their children's behaviour plead for sex education help (Manley 1964).

" The school has been given by society, a clear-cut role to play, to be a primary and trustworthy source of truth and factual knowledge for every child.....Parents should welcome the school's efforts to present sexual facts to children, as most necessary for their protection and orderly development."

(Calderone 1968).

Parents strongly urge or demand sex education (Reiss 1968; Burke 1970; Fidge 1978), in school. 75% parents said sex education was needed (Ripley et al 1971), and they want their children 'properly informed' (Hierons 1972) nearly 92% 'would not object' (Ripley et al 1971). Help would be welcomed from the school (Crowther-Hunt 1976), so parents hope that the school will provide sex education (Farrell 1978). Farrell (1978) also says that parents want sex education in the primary school. 71% want school-based sex education (Balding et al 1989). Running counter to the usual assumption of parental primacy, Bjork (1972), reported that parents thought the school would do a better job than the home and that it was natural to include sex education on the curriculum.

A major attitude which could be very influential on heads concerns parental support for sex education, or for the idea of introducing it. This parental attitude confirmed their opinion that sex education is good, is appreciated and has beneficial outcomes (Fidge 1978). A head's understanding of these parental attitudes would be very influential.

Bibby (1948) reported parents who were overwhelmingly grateful for school-based sex education. This contrasted with the identification of parental support as ranging from 'limited and enquiring' to 'whole-hearted' (Chanter 1966). Parents were described as 'secure' in the knowledge that their children were getting sex education from a wholesome source (the school), rather than the street (Furlong 1967). Parental 'appreciation' (Blisshen 1969), and 'support' (Jilani 1970), together with expressions that sex education programmes were considered 'positive and valuable' (S.B.C. 1971) support later findings of 'approval' for junior sex education (Farrell

1978; Fidge 1978). Earlier, Rogers (1972) had found that surveys showed a generally favourable attitude towards sex education, as was evident in the very large percentages of parents found agreeing with it: 86% (S.O.U. 1969a), 92% (Anaheim 1968), 90% (S.B.C. 1971), 76% - 86% (Gill et al 1971), 86% (Fidge 1978), 96% (Allen 1987), 85% (H.P.A.N.I. 1996).

Farrell (1978) reported parental approval of sex education television material, and very firm disapproval of a group of local primary heads who said that the films would not be shown in their particular schools. Such expressed disapproval of primary heads in the light of the parents' approval of the available materials, suggests a potential for parents to argue the case for primary sex education and to bring pressure on heads, to further their cause,

Parental approval of sex education is not always unreserved and the sort of worries found by Farrell (1978), like, 'It should be done properly... By a good teacher.... and it should not put ideas into children's heads.... nor should some elements be taught too soon', were similar to concerns found by Fidge (1978) and underline parental/societal ambivalence (Hadad 1986; Concern 1994; Haywood 1996; Granada 1997), which was discussed earlier. One of the parental reservations, that sex education should not put ideas into children's heads, undermines the very basis of educational philosophy, to put ideas into children's heads !

Not all parental attitudes favour sex education, some represent opposition and while parental opposition or dislike of sex education comes from a relatively small minority, the fact that there is any, and that it could be

very vocal, might be a disproportionately influential factor on a head's decision-making process.

Freeman (1935), observed, that very avant-garde sex education (though it is not clear what 'avant-garde' implied in 1935. RF), might be objected to by parents. Brewer (1962), considered the kind of parental attitudes of the late 19th century, which generally regarded youthful sexuality as evil and problematic, and still evident in more enlightened times. The perceptions some parents had of possible outcomes of sex education suggested they were unsure that knowledge was wholly beneficial (Fidge 1978). Parental attitudes can operate to inhibit sex education.

Coombs and Craft (1987) identified three factors on which parents' perceptions depend, namely, their own school experiences; their feelings about their child's educational achievements; their experiences of their own child's school. Parents' views on sex education may differ widely from the schools' and could be either more conservative or more liberal (Went 1985). This could be a source of dissatisfaction. Both Chanter (1966) and Johnson and Schutt (1966), noted that parents' attitudes can inhibit the introduction of sex education. Older people (parents) tend to be more conservative in their attitudes to sex education (S.O.U. 1969a; Fidge 1978) and this could have implications for head teachers' attitudes. Less positive sexual attitudes were seen to be related to parents in 'lower' social classes (Newson and Newson 1968), though Gill et al. (1971) found that a majority of all parents in all socio-economic groups favoured a shared parent/school basis for sex education.

The moral aspects of any sex education programme might be an area for possible tension (Atkin 1995). Musgrove and Taylor (1965), reported finding teachers' perceptions of parents as being comparatively indifferent to the moral and social training of children in school, and of ranking 'family life education' as last in rank order of six 'commonly accepted aims of education' from which they were asked to choose.

Fitzgerald (1976) found that while parents were unwilling to criticise the content and methods used in the academic curriculum, they were ready to comment on the moral curriculum, and how it was taught. It has been observed that differences between teachers' and parents' perceived roles, and the lack of co-operation in planning the moral curriculum, has created a situation of possible conflict (Musgrave 1978). Equally problematic are the dilemmas experienced in handling the competing moral codes within our society (Concern 1994; Reiss 1995) and the need to square this with the requirement for 'due regard to moral considerations and the value of family life' referred to in Circular 5/94 (DfE 1994). This could have implications for sex education decisions. Opposition to sex education is partly based on the fears and worries expressed concerning the physical and moral well-being of pupils (Went 1985).

Adult perceptions of children's sexuality could have an important bearing on their attitudes to sex education. An adult reluctance to acknowledge children's sexual interest and behaviour has been observed (Broderick 1966a; Goldman and Goldman 1982), and anxiety from adults over issues of the control of children's sexual behaviour (B.C.C. 1966; Gillham 1997). Negative attitudes towards children's sexual experimentation (Newson and

Newson 1968; Yates 1979; Stein 1984), are noted, which in turn affect children's attitudes towards their own sexuality (Segal 1962).

Some parents and teachers are confused over the concepts of children's innocence and ignorance. The concern to protect a child's innocence is problematic in our society, potentially harmful to the child, and likely to inhibit sex education (Goldman and Goldman 1988; Went 1988; Massey 1990; Reiss 1995; Haywood 1996).

" An adult's anxiety to protect a child's innocence may instil an irrational fear of this fundamental aspect of life."
(Segal 1962).

"....it is clear that most of today's parents live in a dream world if they imagine their children remain innocent for long. Ignorant, yes, innocent, definitely no."
(Proops 1971).

" Parents and teachers may feel that they should be careful not to 'spoil' childhood by giving explicit information about sexuality before it is necessary. Uncertainty or unawareness of development may mean that they leave it 'too late' in the sense that misleading information has already been passed on from friends."
(Farrell 1978).

Parental attitudes can affect heads' sex education decisions through a variety of different ways. Heads could fear upsetting parents or fail to believe they want and appreciate school sex education. Parents' disagreement over moral aspects of sex education might cause possible tension. Heads are variously aware of parents' views but their perceptions of parents' attitudes can be erroneous and therefore decisions which are based on the head's perceptions of parents' attitudes, will be affected by the accuracy of those perceptions.

2.11 CHILD - PARENT RELATIONSHIPS

It may not be immediately obvious that pressure and influence comes from child-parent relationships which can affect what happens in school. Children and parents form two thirds of the inner hub (child-parent-teacher) of the primary school. The interaction each has with the other has considerable significance for the ways in which the school develops. This section examines the child-parent relationship to see what influence it may have on heads' sex education decisions. Difficulties concerning sex education are said to reside in the adult's mind and not the child's:

" The children in particular have done more than they know to convince me that what difficulty there is in sex education lies in the mind of the adult, and not in that of the child."
Bibby (1944).

Goldman and Goldman (1982) found that there was a reluctance by children to admit the sexuality and sexual activity of their parents. This comes largely from the negative attitudes of telling children about sex and the implications children draw from these attitudes and barriers which they experience. Parents have a wide range of anxieties connected with the topic of human sexuality, particularly in dealing with it with their own children (Wyness 1992). Among their anxieties is the worry that young children will want to watch their parents having sex, or be frightened if they overhear or come upon their love-making. For pubertal and post-pubertal children, knowledge of parents' sexuality can create an uncomfortable awareness of sexual attraction between parent and child or even be perceived as a threat. The rationalisation sometimes developed to alleviate this feeling is 'my parents are far too old to be having sex', and conversely, 'he/she is far too young to be interested in sex'. Both are protective mechanisms, but:

"...if parents deny the sexual development of their children, they cannot help them to accept the responsibility which goes with it, nor make the right decisions about their sexual behaviour."

Went (1985).

A child's sex education starts at birth and is highly influenced by the parent's attitudes and actions (or lack of them) (Irwin 1977; David and Wise 1987; Calderone and Johnson 1990). Conversely children can influence their parents' attitudes as a result of sex education at school (Burke 1970).

In the mid 1930s, Curry (c1934) observed that the development of proper communication and the avoidance of guilt, in matters of sex depended on the adult's relationship with the child (quoted in Brewer 1962). In the B.B.C. survey it was found that the Parents' relationships with both teachers and children affected the quality and fluency of children's discussions of sex topics (S.B.C. 1971). Communication with parents provides children with sex information (Elias and Gebhard 1969) and while it is noted elsewhere that there are differences in the attitudes of parents in different socio-economic groups in this regard, as well as vocabulary and emotional problems (Fidge 1978; Went 1985), it is very significant for the child that parents persevere with the best level of communication they can and not fall into the silence which encourages negative attitudes and causes the child to seek help from other sources.

It is essential for parents to tell their children the truth, and thereby develop a trusting style of communication with them (Fidge 1978a; Went 1985; Massey 1990). But while parents know the value of honest commun-

ication they often fail, and communication between the generations is often very poor (Eppel and Eppel 1966; Stiller 1967; Kirkendall and Miles 1968; Fidge 1978, 1978a; David and Wise 1987; Allen 1987; Goldman and Goldman 1988; Lenderyou 1993; Balding 1994; Clift et al 1996).

Advice from the British Council of Churches was that parents should establish a dialogue with their children (B.C.C. 1966) but many parents wait for the child to initiate conversation, a stance which implied that somehow the child would indicate when he was 'ready'. This rarely leads to positive communication since many children do not ask.

" Few parents can bring themselves to talk about such matters.....
It's all very well to say wait until you are asked. If parents wait, they might wait for ever."

Stiller (1967).

Little is known about the way parents tell their children about sex, how much information they give them or at what stages in their development (Farrell 1978). Other aspects of communication, like the degree of truth-telling, whether parents 'filter' or modify information and the frequency of information-giving were investigated by Fidge (1978), who found that parents' subjective perceptions of their communication skills were at variance with their actual performance. Parents experience many problems in communication with their children (Fidge 1978). As suggested above, one major barrier is the need for parents and children to come to terms with the reciprocal recognition of each other's sexuality.

" For parents to take on the serious responsibility of the sex education of their children....would immediately involve having to present a sense of their own sexuality to their children and, at the same time, admit to themselves the sexual nature of their children. For the majority of adults it is difficult to conceive of a way in which this can be done without provoking the most

profound ambivalences on the part of the child, and equally profound anxieties on the part of the parent."

Gagnon and Simon (1973).

Apart from difficulties in vocabulary and factual information (Fidge 1978), the majority of parents are still embarrassed and frightened by their children's enquiries and these feelings are easily communicated to the child (Dawkins 1957; Rigby 1962; Holmes 1968; S.B.C. 1971; Gammage 1989; Went 1994). One serious consequence of the child's awareness of the parent's awkwardness and embarrassment, is to stop asking questions and seek the information somewhere else (Disney 1971). Where there are no other reliable adult sources the child is likely to develop the same sexual attitudes which those surrounding adults have been socialised into.

" We suggest that the child's concrete experience of sexual taboos, the consistent inhibitions enforced by parents and a growing awareness of the unspoken embarrassments about sex in the adult world hastens the process of social conformity....."

Goldman and Goldman (1982).

In seeking to understand their sexual world, children are hindered by the evasions, inhibitions, and guilt feelings arising from their parents, who are themselves restrained by their own feelings and social pressures (Goldman and Goldman 1982). Where these negative factors were not found in the parents, children were freed from feelings of embarrassment and shame (Steinhaus 1965).

The emphasis on communication is because relationships are more clearly manifested through this means than most others. To re-establish communication and show that it is proper and appropriate to discuss sex with adults, is an important contribution adults can make to a child's

understanding of sex (Dawkins 1967; Calderone and Johnson 1990). The declaration that there would be no problems if only parents would answer questions from the beginning (Pickering 1965), and the cautious warning of danger if they do not (Gaitskell 1976), begs the whole question of the parent's competence in this regard.

Most parents do not initiate sex talk (Farrell 1978) and there is considerable disagreement in the views of parents and children over the ease with which parents say they can talk to their children about sex (Farrell 1978; Fidge 1978; 1978a). Mothers are better at talking with their children than fathers (Farrell 1978), and the mother-daughter relationship is the most effective of all parent-child sex information-giving combinations (Shipman 1968; Farrell 1978). Typical of the inaccurate perceptions parents have of their role in sex communication was the 90% group of parents who said they could discuss sex with their children (Ripley et al 1971). Pickering (1965) reported some parents as saying that it was easier to speak with those children who were about 12 years and over, before they become emotionally involved. These days some children by that age would already be sexually active (N.C.O.P.F. 1979; Gillham 1997).

Whatever the perceptions parents might have of their communication role, children report that most parents do not, or rarely, talk about sex matters to them (Fidge 1978a). In a rather cosy, 'gather round and I'll tell you all about Mother Nature' mode, the 'Why didn't you tell us? We can easily understand this.' response from children, countered by the 'I really don't know, thought you wouldn't understand' syndrome, is portrayed in Beech

(1928) and reflects the age-old 'excuse' most adults unconsciously use to cover up their unwillingness to communicate of either waiting till children ask, or are perceived to be 'ready' for 'such information'.

Eppel and Eppel (1966) quote children saying that their parents do not seem very keen to tell them about sex. The non-communication by parents compounds and encourages the problems of children's 'pooled ignorance' (Elias and Gebhard 1969). It has been reported that:

" It is a natural and healthy development of teenagers to be reluctant to discuss sexual matters with their parents; in a sense, talking about sex is sharing a sexual experience. At this time of life teenagers become much more self conscious about even verbal intimacy with their parents."

Lorand (1965).

Even if good communication has been established before the teens, it may not be sustained (Balding 1994). Went (1985) has remarked that many parents are hurt and perplexed that, having previously established good communication, their children then go off to other adults for further sex information. Some older children have said that there are some topics they would not be prepared to talk about with their parents, either because of 'adult embarrassment' or because the adults have communicated the concept that they 'expected the children to know', or that children perceived their parents would disapprove (Farrell 1978).

Parents accept that children know more about sex than they realise, or than they knew at their age (Kirk 1967; Fidge 1978; Winn 1984) but this does not necessarily enhance communication. While it is said that school-based sex education will stimulate parent-child communication, Farrell (1978)

found that many parents did not know many details about their child's sex education at school (H.P.A.N.I. 1996); that the children were reluctant to discuss it, and the parents reluctant to ask.

It has long been established that schools should aim at developing communication between parent and child in sex matters (U.N.E.S.C.O. 1965; C.C. 1990; A.F.Y. 1992) given the many complex factors examined above, this would be a formidable task, and one which many heads might be reluctant to address. The B.B.C. reported children finding it easier to talk to teachers than parents (S.B.C. 1971), but many teachers say children have never asked them about sex (Fidge 1978b) and children do not rate teachers highly as a popular source of sex information (Fidge 1978a). Bibby's (1948) observation that many children prefer to ask any adult except their parents, will be true only insofar as there is another adult (teacher ?) able and willing to discuss the topic.

Much of what is found about child-parent relationships regarding sex teaching and communication is likely to be true of other adult-child relationships in this regard. It is likely that heads and teachers who have similar anxieties about revealing their own sexuality and accepting that of the children, in the same way many parents do, will have the same problems. The close, warm, friendly, family type relationships which primary teachers develop with their children will place them in a similar position to the children's natural parents. The whole notion of the relationship of the teacher to the child in British education is in terms of the teacher being 'in loco parentis'. Therefore decisions about sex education in the primary school will be affected by the heads' attitudes to

being able to handle sex-related matters with children. The degree of difficulty heads have in this matter will reflect those found in the current adult population in general, and those adults who are parents of primary-aged children, in particular.

2.12 FAMILY INFLUENCE

The child's family is said to be the most important influence on its sex education (C.E.B.E. 1964). But family influence can be both positive and negative, and therefore it was what Edmonds (1968) described as 'good family influence' that was regarded as being vital for sound sex education.

" Sex education is not a singular crusade undertaken solely by those with a calling, but happens all the time, both within and outside family life... The way that people behave within a family, and their attitudes to sex, must obviously affect the attitudes of their children. Families shape their children in so many ways, sex roles can be learned.... emotional responsiveness can be developed.... Loving is a demonstrative action, and one often learns to love through seeing people who are loving.....

The caring family - despite the obvious 'failings' which occur from time to time - lays the foundations for a child to be able to cope with new situations as they arise: the uncaring family may give rise to a young person who is overdemanding, in need of constant reassurance, or has doubts and fears about sexual matters."

David and Wise (1987).

Early, non-repressive, warm and tender relationships in a loving family atmosphere, cultivated healthy sexual attitudes for later in life (Flemming 1962; Edwards 1967; Burke 1970; Calderone and Johnson 1990). Three basic areas of sex knowledge; where babies come from, sexual intercourse and certain pubertal changes, are generally first learnt within the context of the family, together with the 'mother' role, which is passed on as one of the first sexuality concepts to be absorbed (Farrell 1978; Goldman and Goldman 1988).

Family life enables children to learn about bodily sex differences, both children and adults, in some cases they may see siblings born, or at least share in the early intimacies of a new baby, and learn about pregnancy.

(Goldman and Goldman 1982). The influence of a stable family life on a child's development is vital (Ray and Went 1995). Bennell (1969) reported that stable families were more likely to be common in small town situations. But the family situation for many children these days is far from stable or orthodox (Bibbings 1996).

Even at the time of Bennell's (1969) findings Calderone (1969) and Wayland (1970), were pointing to the changing nature and make-up of families.

Calderone (1969) pointed to the relaxing of supervision, rules and close family relations which shielded children from harsh social realities.

Wayland (1970) suggested:

"....the major factor (for interest in sex education RF) has been changes in the family structure in the highly urban and industrial society... The emergence of the nuclear family, the generally long involvement of young people in education with the extended dependency on the family, the movement of women into employment and out of the home...has reduced the effectiveness of earlier forms of social control and required a new pattern of relationships within families."
Wayland (1970).

While the influence of the family on children's sex education and attitudes is very important, the break-up or diminishing authority of the family today, with its changing structure, could be one of the main reasons for establishing sex education in school, because less sex education is now provided through the the natural channels of the family. Current sex education schemes (Kent 1990), and official advice (DES (1987; DfE 1994) have traditional concepts of the family and family life central to their

main guiding concepts. Although a topic of study in its own right, what is referred to as 'family life education' is often closely akin to sex education. Closely allied to sexual matters are moral issues, and the home has a strong influence in that regard (C.A.C.E. 1967), but the moral principles of the family may not accord with what is being encouraged at school.

One of the common current aspects of family life is the non-married status of many parents, and where the spouse (be it common law or marital) is absent, or permanently gone, many difficulties present themselves for children (Goldman and Goldman 1982; Went 1985; David and Wise 1987). Additionally, the diversity of views and attitudes to sexual and moral matters in today's families, and the different aspects of cultures reflected in many families (David and Wise 1987), have considerable implications for introducing sex education into schools (DES 1987; DfE 1994; Concern 1994; Riches 1995; Ray and Went 1995; T.E.S. 1996).

In the mid 1960s the wide variety of home backgrounds, which included situations of cohabitation, divorce, adultery, extra- and non-marital behaviours, needed to be given sensitive consideration in terms of sex education (Chanter 1966). This is still true today. Different levels, standards and tolerance of sexual conduct and attitudes, related to social class will also need to be taken into account (Elias and Gebhard 1969), and care is urged over what is considered normal, in order to avoid giving offence (David and Wise 1987).

Very sensitive issues in family structure, which may not be seen as representing the 'norm' are evident and should be considered, like 'gay parenting', and 'multiple' family groupings, which arise from shifting adult relationships. Though not strictly or immediately relevant to some heads in terms of sex education the issue of sexual abuse within the family is one which presents further difficulty (Furniss 1987; Goldman and Goldman 1988; Reiss 1990; Trudell 1993; Brook 1997). For many heads these present potential risks which could well affect sex education decisions.

Some publications have been produced which address these issues, for children, but their appearance in schools may not be considered appropriate by many (Bosche 1983; Hessel 1987; Newman 1989; Heron and Maran 1991). The issues are also addressed in the literature (e.g. Winn 1984; N.C.W.G.B. 1989; Calderone and Johnson 1990).

Consideration of the family as a vehicle for socialisation has been widely considered (Parsons and Bales 1955; Bell and Vogel 1961; Coser 1974; Morgan 1975; Farrell 1978; Goldman and Goldman 1988; O.U. 1992; Tunick and Singh 1996; O.N.S. 1997) and this aspect too has significant relevance to sex education .

Since the turn of the century the basic understanding of the advantages of the school and the home being linked in the common pursuit of education has been recognised (Brewer 1962). This necessitates teachers having a sound knowledge and respect for the family backgrounds of the children they teach (Wake 1966; Bjork 1972; Went 1988).

Claims that sex education intruded into family privacy and responsibility are longstanding (Drake 1968) and are still made (Tingle 1986; McLeod and Davies 1992; Davies 1993; Danon 1995), but this view is not shared by the majority of parents who agree with school-based sex education (Fidge 1978; Farrell 1978; Allen 1989).

It is said that good families promote good sex education within them and generate supportive attitudes for sex education in school. Inadequate families generate poor sex attitudes among their members and are a basic reason for providing sex education in school. The families are a main component of total environment of the school and influence what the school does. I would therefore expect parental and family considerations to influence the head's sex education decisions.

2.13 CHILD SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

The primary school is concerned with developing the whole child which arguably includes sexual development. Other developmental aspects including moral and physical elements will affect a child's sexual development. Not all heads see primary children as sexual beings so influence and subsequent action (if any) will come from the way heads perceive the child. The child's needs and interests are further factors which influence curriculum decisions. So questions like; Are children interested in sex? If so, should such interest be used to stimulate learning? Do they need to communicate on sexual matters? Or is that an inappropriate skill for primary children? What do children know about sex? Where do they get the information from? Is it more advanced than most adults would expect? Responses to questions like these will

influence sex education decisions.

Fundamental to the whole structure of education, and one of the primary factors of influence is the concept of child development. There are many facets of the developing child which must be considered if any education offered is to be effective.

The principle of contributing towards the 'spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community, by securing that efficient education throughout these stages shall be available to meet the needs of the population of their area', which was laid upon education authorities in the Education Act 1944 (section 7) is still reflected in the recent reform legislation of the 1980s-1990s and in local authority curriculum statements (Kent 1990).

Heads will need to be aware of the many facets of the child and in particular those aspects of development which pertain to sex education, including physical, mental, moral, emotional, social, sexual and personal. The development of sex education will need to take these aspects into account, and decisions whether or not to include sex education, might depend, not only on the head's willingness to accommodate these factors, but his acceptance and understanding of them. The decisions he makes will be taken in the light of other factors of influence from other sources. In all matters of curriculum decision-making, the influences are complex, and particularly so in the case of controversial matters (Gill 1988; Gamage 1989; Reiss 1995). The examination of some of the issues raised in connection with child development illustrates some of the problems and

difficulties a head might need to consider regarding sex education.

Although sex is only one element of the total personality it has a direct relationship and influence on all other areas of one's life and personality (Schulz 1968) and therefore should be regarded as an important part of the educational process. The world children experience from the moment of birth, is a sexual world, which is gradually discovered experientially and cognitively as they develop (Unger 1979; Goldman and Goldman 1988; Calderone and Johnson 1990). Hemming (1971a) saw sex education arising logically from children's development and the job of the school was not only to meet, but anticipate the natural curiosity of young children.

The child's self-concept is an important aspect of his development (Gagern 1953; Went 1988; Sanders and Swinden 1990; Lenderyou 1993). A right relationship to self included a right attitude to life and sexuality. Personal understanding at both the physical and emotional levels were identified as important for the individual as well as the society in which the individual was developing (Burke 1970). The early years are crucial for the development of fundamental sexual skills and concepts, such as self esteem, sex roles and gender identity (Goldman and Goldman 1982; Went 1985; Smithers and Zientek 1991).

Reference has already been made to the effects of society on a child's sexual development and in dealing with this it is important to consider the child's background and environment as they relate to its development (L.C.C. 1964; Coombs and Craft 1987). There are fewer sexual inhibitions in our present society and this has implications for children's sexual

development, sex education (Moss 1965; Eppel and Eppel 1966; Winn 1984; Reiss 1995; Atkins 1995) and their moral development (C.A.C.E. 1967).

The sociological rationale developed by Reiss (1967) from an examination of other research findings, for the development of permissive attitudes, was based on factors of urbanisation, the weakening and decline of religious controls and changes in behaviour patterns of young people. It is such sociological factors which shape children's sexual thinking.

" Children are developing in a changing world, where many sexual issues are debated and their attendant consequences influence children's thinking directly or indirectly, sooner or later in their development."

Goldman and Goldman (1982).

Early experiences are very influential in a child's sexual development and attitudes gained during these early stages remain through life (Schulz 1968; Calderone and Johnson 1990).

" Each individual carries within himself the remnants of infancy which are very powerful and outspoken. The quality of infantile experiences determines in large measure the degree to which adjustments in later life are satisfactory. Sex education is a vital part of these experiences."

Segal (1962).

There are no cognitive or developmental factors why children should not perceive sex differences realistically from an early age (Goldman and Goldman 1982). Kreidler and Kreidler (1966) found a considerable ability in younger children to understand basic sexual concepts and while some of their information was not accurate, it was shown that children construct their own theories to provide a 'logical' explanation of their perceptions. Just as early 'good' experiences lead to wholesome attitudes, so negative

experiences can inhibit and distort sexual development (Van Gelderen 1935; De Kok 1935; Goldman and Goldman 1982), this is also true for 'non-experiences', that is the barrier of silence which many children are perplexed by (Goldman and Goldman 1988). Calderone (1968) also cited ignorance and precocity as distorting-elements of sexual development.

Broderick (1966) reported that evidence was accumulating to support the suggestion that complex heterosexual interests and interaction were developing at younger ages than formerly. Nowadays it is very common in primary schools to be aware of overt heterosexual behaviour between very young children (6 - 8), which a few years ago would only have been expected from teenagers (Winn 1984). A recent case of primary aged boys appearing at the Old Bailey for allegedly raping a younger girl at school (TES 1998) is a very extreme example of overt primary-aged sexual behaviour, but various examples of physical sexual behaviour by other children of this age were cited as a result of the publicity surrounding this case. Sex related behaviour is seen by some to be encouraged by sexual knowledge, and by others the result of ignorance. Broderick's (1966) observation of the age sex education should begin is very appropriate now since he argued that the question should not be 'At what age should sex education begin?', but..

" How can persons best be helped to cope with their sexual experiences and potential at any age ?"

Broderick (1966).

The importance in recognising that, sexual attitudes develop before puberty (H.E.C. 1973) stems from the fact that these attitudes are carried into adult life. Earlier Broderick (1966a) found support for the claim that

there is a real continuity in the sexual development of attitudes and experience of the pre-pubertal stage, through into adolescence.

The need to extend sex education to include sex role development work was referred to in the 1960s (Kirkendall and Miles 1968), arising from such studies as (Brown 56; Dunn 1960; Kagan and Moss 1962; Lynn 1966) and more recent works (Maccoby 1980; Stein 1984; Hargreaves and Colley 1986; Jacklin and Wilson 1989), suggest that work concerning sex roles and gender identity is still very important.

As with other behaviours, the foundations of moral and social behaviour are laid in early childhood (Jilani 1970). Factual and moral guidance are essential to sound sex education (L.C.C. 1949, 1964; Atkins 1995) and religious and moral development were identified as proper aims for the primary school (C.A.C.E. 1967; N.C.C. 1993). The question of moral development was discussed in terms of its links with emotional and social development, with the concepts of right and wrong arising from the home, and with these concepts later becoming qualified by influences from a wider network of social factors (C.A.C.E. 1967). Giving sexual knowledge allows pre-pubertal children to anticipate, prepare mentally and begin to construct their own principles of sexual behaviour before the bias of emotional involvement of actual sexual attraction is experienced (Wright 1968; Ray and Went 1995).

Acquiring a sound understanding of young people's attitudes, beliefs and aspirations, and a knowledge of their physical, emotional and social development in society (Bessey 1962), are important for teachers. An

awareness of the individual differences of information and experience of children (Elias and Gebhard 1969), and an understanding of the widely differing levels of physical and mental development within the same year groups (Menzies 1971) are factors which need taking into account when considering the provision of sex education (Gammage 1989; DfE 1994).

Teachers might need to take into account the individual temperaments and developmental levels of the pupils (Brewer 1962). Differing developmental levels has led some to observe that the school may not be the best place for sex education (Schofield 1973) but the accommodation of differing developmental levels affects all areas of learning and recommendations to exclude most other curriculum areas is never heard.

One problem identified for school-based sex education was that of the sexual maturation of children, well before it was socially expedient or appropriate for them to engage in mature sexual activity (Curry 1934; Brewer 1962; C.A.C.E. 1967; Winn 1984; Williams 1987). This is more a social problem than an educational one, but it has led some opponents of sex education to raise the spectre of precocious and permissive sexual activity, allegedly encouraged by sex education (Danon 1995; Anchell 1995).

A child's development passes through identifiable stages and interacts with other factors. It is an understanding of that process which helps to inform curriculum decisions.

" The emotional aspects of the child's development, like the intellectual, follows a regular sequence based on the interaction between maturation and biological factors on the one hand, and experience and learning within the cultural setting on the other. Emotional, social and intellectual are closely

intertwined in mental growth: the child is a total personality."
C.A.C.E. (1967).

Primary aged children were observed to identify emotionally and intellectually with the content of the T.V. sex education programmes (S.B.C. 1971) and their intellectual curiosity was not inhibited by their emotional involvement. Primary children are quite capable of understanding the main facts of sexual reproduction (Chanter 1966; Collyer 1995). The reason why some adults fail to recognise the need for sex education for primary-aged children could be that:

" Most curricula in schools and advice to parents are based not upon research findings but upon intuitive ideas of what children might be capable of grasping, as well as what they appear to need at certain periods of their lives."
Goldman and Goldman (1982).

Where research has shown in other curriculum areas that the commonly held perceptions of what children could understand was erroneous radical revision of that curriculum area ensued. The same could apply to sex education (Goldman and Goldman 1982).

One concept which has had a retarding effect on sex education is that of 'readiness'. Naturally it is necessary to consider the child's level of understanding and maturation (Wake 1966; DfE 1994). At some schools where the B.B.C. sex education programmes were not going to be shown, one of the reasons was that the children were not yet ready for those facts (S.B.C. 1971). Brewer (1962) stated that children would learn what they wanted when they were ready, but it is for the child, and not the adult to determine this (S.B.C. 1971).

" Children of all ages have a sexual quality to their lives and

the discussion of sex is something they are 'ready' for. They are 'mature' enough to handle it if presented in accordance with sound educational principles."

Reiss (1968).

The two possibilities why parents were not telling their children about intimate sexual topics, were either they were reluctant to do so or did not realise that their children were ready to learn about them (Farrell 1978; Goldman and Goldman 1988). Children's acquisition of sex information comes about through a learning process (Hemming 1971a; Rogers 1972; Went 1989; Brook 1997). Children cannot draw inferences from nature about human reproduction unaided, they need to be taught (Bibby 1944). Children need to go through this learning process of factual sex instruction before they can be given guidance on sexual behaviour (Chanter 1966). The pre-pubertal child benefits from specific teaching of sex because he is seen as a factualist, a realist (Furlong 1967).

Because children acquire sex information from a variety of sources, it is important that they receive sex teaching to enable them to make sense of what they have picked up; if this does not happen, children will constitute their own theories and explanations to account for their experiences (Goldman and Goldman 1982).

".....children possess a sexual life which finds utterance both in direct sexual activities and in sexual fantasies."
Klein (1932).

Very young children are curious about sex (Dawkins 1957), their sex games are the result of curiosity and exploration (Reiss 1968). As they grow, their curiosity finds wider scope in emotional, intellectual as well as physical realms (S.B.C. 1971; Goldman and Goldman 1988).

The child's physical development, the process of growth and physical maturation, particularly the changes at puberty are among the most obvious and compelling reasons many adults accept for the sex education of children in the primary school (Went 1994; TES 1997a). There is considerable evidence that girls tend to begin pubertal changes about two years earlier than boys, that the age of beginning pubertal change is gradually reducing year by year (Porter and Hall 1995), that both boys and girls need preparation for the changes before they experience them, and continued information and advice during the period of change. Most people accept that preparation for pubertal changes should begin well in advance of the actual onset of change, so that girls do not experience their first period, or boys their first 'wet dream' without being prepared for the eventuality (Lenderyou 1993; DfE 1994). This may not necessarily coincide with the child's period in primary school nor that the school should be the place for giving this information (Davies 1994). Pubertal change will need to be considered and could influence the head to provide sex education .

Not everyone accepts that primary children need, or are meant to have sex education (Anchell 1995), and this is a position supported by the notion that children are asexual or are sexually in the suspended animation of the 'latency' period (Davies 1995), a circumstance substantially refuted by most sex educators (Went 1985). Historically, Stall (1897) maintained the sex instinct was dormant in boys until about 14 or 15 (and makes no mention of girls RF). Curry (1934) held that adolescent sexuality was more an obsession of adults, rather than adolescents. Lynes (1958) (as quoted in Bereday, Holmes and Lauwerys 1958) says that children are the only neutral sex, who remain more or less sexless until the onset of the adolescent

stage, when, he claims they think of nothing else. Sexless or not, Drake (1968) declares that sex education can adversely affect children's development, and is opposed to it. Pirone (1969), says that the normal child has little interest in sex, and that children cannot understand sex until they are grown up.

There are many issues regarding children's sexual development which could influence sex education decisions; the concept of sex as an element of the total personality, the recognition of continuity in sex development from the pre-pubertal stage to adolescence, whether it is appropriate for children to get factual and moral guidance, and help in developing understanding at the physical and emotional levels.

2.14 THEORY OF CHILD SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT

Much of the sexual morality and understanding of the Western world is founded upon the Judeo-Christian traditions, modified by the influence of the early Christian Fathers, based on New Testament thought (Johnson and Belzer 1973), and therefore, while it might be thought that we are living in a permissive society, the sexual/moral basis of our society is one of comparative conservatism (Goldman and Goldman 1982).

Before considering the development of sex education in our culture some understanding of the concepts of human sexuality, particularly children's sexuality and sexual development, would be helpful. It is suggested that the first formal attempts at sex education arose, in this country, out of the expansion of the public schools, during the growth of the middle classes in the mid Nineteenth Century (Greaves 1965). But for sex

education to be considered at all, some change in adult perceptions of children as sexual beings was necessary.

The adult's response to the issue of children's sexuality is governed largely by the way the adult sees and understands the nature of the child. If the child is seen as asexual or non-sexual, then no sex information or education whether at home or elsewhere, is required. If on the other hand the child is seen as having some kind of sexual nature, then that aspect of his personality, like the rest of it, will need educating.

If the child is perceived as having a sexual nature, further questions arise as to the make-up of those characteristics, and the adult's perceptions of the nature and purpose of human sexuality. What the adult thinks about human sexuality, and the nature and needs of the child, will shape what, and if, sex information is given.

The adult's attitudes will determine the 4Ws of sex education, namely, What?, When?, Where?, Whom?. Instrumental in the shaping of adult attitudes towards children's sexual needs, have been the theorists, who have developed differing theories of human sexuality and children's sexual development, some of which (and in several cases, certain aspects of which), have had particular influence on whether or not sex education should be part of the junior school curriculum.

For the purposes of this study, it is only possible to summarise briefly the main principles of some of the classic theories of children's sexual development, and contending arguments as to their merits. As the focus of

this study is on the factors of influence which impinge on the head's sex education decision-making process, I will try to emphasise those aspects which may have informed heads' attitudes towards the issue of children's sexuality, or which might be influential upon a head as he considers whether or not to include, or recommend, sex education for the primary school curriculum.

From the few books which were published in the latter quarter of the Nineteenth Century, that by Thompson (c.1870), seems to characterise the negative way in which sexuality was viewed. The outspoken condemnation of masturbation, the unspoken dangers that lay ahead, the need for extreme caution throughout, reflected the general unwillingness to accept that children were entitled to any sex information at all. The impression was that sex information was harmful and should be withheld from children for as long as possible. There was no understanding of a child's gradual sexual growth, from its birth, nor, if that is the case, the need for that child to be sex educated (Brewer 1962).

Gradually, in recognition of the plight young people were in due to sexual ignorance, books, reflecting a more enlightened attitude, began to appear (Sperry 1893). Not many of these were for younger children, but rather young men and women on the brink of adulthood. Such publications were not based on a coherent understanding of the sexual nature of children, and even as theorists began to investigate the issues, it cannot be said that a unified view began to emerge.

At the turn of the century there was an awakening of interest in the study

of human sexuality and the sexual development of children. Apart from the work of Sigmund Freud (1856 - 1939), others were investigating the world of sexual understanding.

Ellis (1859 - 1939), contributed more than any other individual to the overthrow of the Ptolemaic model in the study of human sexuality. He presented concepts of individual and cultural relativism which underlie almost all sex research today (Brecher 1970). Bell (1902) through his study of children's activities, was able to make, an examination of, and draw conclusions on, children's sexuality. Hall (1904) produced a substantial, two volumed study on adolescence, which is of interest to this study, as he developed the notion that the sexual instinct had its birth at puberty; an idea with which Freud (1922) took issue (see Fleming 1948) and one which is not generally held today.

A comprehensive study on the sexual life of the child resulted from the observations of Moll (1909). Blanton's (1917) study of the behaviour of very young babies contributed to an understanding of the beginnings of sexual development in children. From about 1914, we begin to see the beginnings of a realisation of a need to sex educate children (Hill and Lloyd-Jones 1970). Moves in the direction of sex education were supported by the publicity and report of the National Birthrate Commission (1920 and 1923), which tended to raise awareness of the issues of children's sexual development (Greaves 1965).

Hattendorf's (1932) study of the kind of questions children asked about sex, Isaacs' (1933) careful study of the social development of young

children, and Campbell's (1939) work on the socio-sexual development of children, are illustrative of the kind of work that was being undertaken at this time. Conn's work during the 1940s on children's sexual curiosity (1940), their reactions to learning about genital differences (1940a), their general awareness of sex differences (1947 [with Kanner]), and their knowledge of the origins of babies (1947), added to the understanding of the development of their sexual concepts and pointed up the need for further research.

Kinsey et al. (1948, 1953) brought the whole question of human sexual development into the limelight, creating a vigorous new interest in the public mind. Sears et al. (1957) considered aspects relating to the parental sanctioning of sexual behaviour in children, and Bandura and Walters (1959), surveyed parental responses to children's questions seeking sex information. Ollendorff (1966) produced some powerful observations of the effects on children's sexual development of sex-permissive, and sex-prohibitive societies.

Many researchers could be named as having made significant contributions to our understanding of children's sexual development. The two most heads would immediately recognise are Freud and Piaget, Freud's work on psychosexual development, and Piaget's on psychocognitive development. An outline of the fundamental issues of their arguments will serve as a basis for a brief examination of what aspects of their theories might be influential on the head's decisions regarding sex education.

Freud's (1908) contention of the existence of infantile sexuality, was probably his most controversial theory, more so than the centrality of sex in all forms of human behaviour. He largely based his assertion on the investigations based on childhood memories of some of his earlier patients.

" Sexual life comprises the function of obtaining pleasure from zones of the body..... Sexual life does not only begin at puberty but starts with clear manifestations soon after birth."
Freud (1940).

An earlier claim, which shocked many of those who heard it was that:

" Children have, to begin with, no idea of the significance of the distinction between the sexes, on the contrary, they start from the assumption that the same genital organ (the male one) is possessed by both sexes."
Freud (1914).

Freud's theory of the universality of the penis has not gone unchallenged, and his claim of infantile sexuality needs to be considered in the light of the wider meaning that Freud applied to the word 'sex'.

Through his work, Freud extended the meaning of the word 'sex' to subsume pleasurable physical sensations experienced by the child, sensations of the emotions in appreciating friendship and tenderness, feelings of pleasure in eating, drinking and evacuating, the pleasures of being stroked and fondled and feelings towards others. Although genital activity is not an essential factor of Freud's wider meaning it is included in it, particularly early pleasures from exploring the genitals, therefore the reference to infantile sexuality includes the broader concepts of feelings and relationships.

This accords broadly with the definition used by Goldman and Goldman (1982) in their study of children's sexual thinking, and they make the point that:

" The general public, however, does not always understand or accept this; this is symptomatic of the still widespread ignorance of and resistance to the word sexuality, particularly when associated with children."

Goldman and Goldman (1982).

Freud's three developmental stages of oral, anal and genital, represent, in a chronological sequence, the dominant interest and pleasure-giving areas during the early stages. It is not until children are about three that they may be seen to be in what Freud calls the 'phallic' stage, and where their genital play and stimulation might be said to be their earliest overt sexual activity, and one which develops into masturbation.

From about the age of 5 a latency period is said to begin, lasting until an age which approximates, in Britain, with the end of the junior or primary school stage (about 11 or until the beginnings of the child's onset of puberty).

The latency period has been misunderstood to imply that all sexual interest and activity ceases, but it does not mean that. With the onset of the Oedipal stage there is no further apparent sexual development. With Freud's stages, one does not supplant the other, but with the progress into the next stage, those through which the child has passed, continue to be a feature of the child's sexual expression and continue coincidentally with the latest developmental stage.

During the latency period, oral, anal and genital interest continues, but the child suppresses most outward manifestations of them. Freud's final stage of development is that of pubertal process.

Some consideration of Freud's Oedipal complex is necessary, since in this stage the boy is said to see his father as a rival for his mother's affections, so he becomes jealous of the father, and these feelings of jealousy and sexual rivalry only end when the boy realises the social and sexual taboos on these kinds of feelings, and he is then said to be frightened that his father will punish him by castration.

A girl experiences the Electra complex where she is attached to her father and jealous of her mother. To overcome the complex the girl must accept her femininity, and give up all hope of becoming a male. Both boys and girls struggle with the castration complex, the boy by his fear of it, and the girl by having accepted that it has happened.

It is not clear how Freud's theories square with current family situations of one-parent families, which result either through divorce, choice, or casual cohabiteeism, and the increasingly frequent occurrence of children living with a static parent (either sex) who has a series of opposite-sex boy or girl friends, or the child in a male one-parent family.

Although it covertly existed in the past, there is gradual realisation of children in gay family situations, generally a child with a lesbian mother and lover but occasionally in gay-male families, in our schools. Foster and adopted children, especially of a different ethnic status to the 'parents',

and children living apart from their parents or in institutionalised or group situations, will sometimes be known in the school. The family backgrounds of all children in the school will need to be taken into account, including those which fall outside the 'standard' theories.

Investigations, like those into the father's role in the family (Lamb 1976) and those of children in community situations (Rabin 1965), could set the pattern for other studies into adult family members, with less 'orthodox' positions and 'non-family' children.

It is not always easy to prove other people's theories. Kline (1972) has found that there is some supporting evidence for the oral stage, good evidence for the Oedipal complex and firm evidence for the anal stage. On the other hand Ollendorff (1966/1974), argues against, and rejects, the Oedipus Complex, on the grounds of its illogicality.

Of particular interest in this study is the latency period, and there is some evidence from the pilot study to suggest that some heads regard primary age children to be in a latent period of sexual inactivity and disinterest (see also: Davies 1993; Anchell 1995). Of all aspects of Freud's work, the latency period is less easy to support

Broderick (1966) claimed that there was little evidence for a latency period in which children fail to manifest any sexual interest, activity or development. Another explanation is suggested:

" The latency stage may be accounted for by simpler social learning theories as the result of severe taboos and sanctions imposed by an inhibited and sexually repressive society."

(Goldman and Goldman 1982).

Which could mean, remove the taboos and repression, and the 'socially-constructed' latency period disappears. Currently there is virtually no support for a latency period (Went 1985; Calderone and Johnson 1990).

Criticism of some of the aspects Freud's work, which is relevant to this study may be summarised as follows:

1. Children simply do not lust after their parents in the adult sense of the word.

2. The kind of married relationship remarks ('I'm going to marry Mummy') etc., that children make, again lack the meanings adults might ascribe to them, since children do not understand the sexual relationships and roles involved in marriage.

3. The understanding of bodily differences, by children, are accepted in the same ordinary way as any other day to day information.

4. It is very rare to find examples of cases where children are fearful of castration (boys) or who believe they have been castrated (girls).

5. It is thought that childhood sex-roles are not acquired by copying, or identifying with the same-sex parent (though children's observations of parents may serve to inform their sex-roles later in life), but by interacting with other children and observing children on television and in books, and so on.

6. There is very little evidence of the notion of anal birth as being so widely held as Freud suggested.

7. There is little evidence to support the latency period theory. (see: Kreidler and Kreidler 1966; Brophy 1977; Goldman and Goldman 1982).

The work of Piaget has had a substantial impact on education, and some aspects of his work, and work which derives from his school, is of relevance to this study. The relevance is in terms of what specific Piagetian ideas are influential on heads in their decision-making process regarding sex education.

It has been observed that the major focus of Piaget's work is on logical thinking and the ways children think about and solve problems in regard to mathematical and physical science (Goldman and Goldman 1982), and that this central theme is also reflected in much of the work of other Piaget-related researchers.

At first sight it might appear that Piaget's work is of little relevance to a study concerned with the factors which influence the introduction of children's sex education. There is little in Piaget's work on children's sexuality, but insights are gained when relating his work on children's cognitive development, to their sexual development, as may be seen below.

There is criticism of Piaget's work due to the sparsity of studies concerning the sexual/biological conceptualisation of children. A summary of the stages of genetic development is found (Piaget and Inhelder 1966), but in this and other works there is nothing on biological causality. Some reporting of children's views of the ways babies originate, is given from anecdotal evidence in an early work (1929), from which he deduced three developmental stages which had some kind of logical sequence:

1. The pre-existence of babies.
2. Babies are artificially produced.
3. Babies somehow produced from 'stuff' from parents' bodies.

In regard to Piaget's postulations on the sexual development of children, Kreitler and Kreitler (1966) observe that they are made without the systematic collection of supporting material. From their study, Kreitler and Kreitler (1966) were unable to find any evidence to support Piaget's 'Artificiality' theory.

An observation of this lack of attention to children's sexual/biological thinking, by Piaget, is developed into a tentative suggestion that future researchers may have been dissuaded from undertaking research into children's sexual/biological thinking, because of the inference that this topic was perceived as being possibly insignificant or of little value (Goldman and Goldman 1982).

It could be hypothesised that some heads, who value the ideas of Piaget, are similarly influenced into placing little or less importance on the development of children's sexual/biological thinking than other areas of thought, and are therefore less likely to promote sex education.

With the insights given by Piaget, and the developmental stages he has identified it is possible to transfer some of these concepts to illustrate developmental stages in children's sexual understanding. There are many heads who argue that certain educational topics or activities are inappropriate, because of 'developmental' reasons, sex education is

sometimes such an area.

A useful spreadsheet (see Appendix 1) appears in the front inner cover of Brophy (1977) giving a potted comparison of the different developmental stages, from ages 0yrs to 12+yrs, of the following authors and headings:

Cognitive development (Piaget)

Moral Judgment (Kohlberg)

Developmental Progressions (Test Content)

Developmental Tasks (Havighurst)

Personal-Social development (Erikson)

Psychosexual Stages (Freud).

From the comparison of Freud's psychosexual stages and Piaget's psychocognitive stages (and others) (Anthony 1970) it is possible to suggest that the ability to formulate generalisations, based on actual observations and experiences, which arises with concrete operational thinking might lead to a type of latency period. This might appear to be so because the taboos, embarrassment, inhibitions, and silence with which children are often greeted over sex matters, forces them to adopt a more socially acceptable covert stance regarding sex interest, and thereby cause adults to perceive that they (the children), have 'lost interest' for a while.

This is partly referred to above. Another interesting connection exists:

"if puberty in Freudian terms corresponds with Piaget's formal operational thinking, then the sexual drives requiring an object of love may have the potential for diminishing the natural egocentrism of the child. The altruistic need to give as well as to get, provides a means of moving beyond concretisms

or more abstract thinking. In each case the connection could be causal, one appearing to cause the other; or it could be interactive....to cause development to higher stages."

Goldman and Goldman (1982).

It is against the theoretical background of the differing concepts of children's sexuality and sexual development that consideration can be given to the reasons whether or not to include sex education in the primary school curriculum. The reasons headteachers have for the decisions they make will be influenced by their understanding of children's sexuality.

What heads believe about such concepts as:

no sexual manifestation during the primary years is proof of a latency period, or due to the taboos and sanctions of a sexually repressive society;

children's sex remarks and comprehension do not have the same meanings adults would attribute to them;

children formulate generalisations based on observations and invent meanings and explanations for what they do not understand.... will influence their decisions.

Many of the reasons heads act upon could involve findings from less familiar research. But three reasons flow from a consideration of the works of Piaget and Freud as to whether heads:

1. support the idea of a latency period.
2. recognise a stage in a child's cognitive development at which sex education is appropriate (which could be after the age of 11),
3. agree that, at their level, some kind of sex education should be provided for all children on a spiral, or matched-level basis.

2.15 CHILDREN'S NEEDS

Children's natural curiosity about sex needs to be satisfied (Elles 1976). If it is to be satisfied in school, through formal sex education, it will depend on heads' responses to the recognition of need. A child's need for sex information is long established and supports the concept of school-based sex education (Van Gelderen 1935; Hyett 1935; Bibby 1948; Fidge 1978a; Wetton and Moon 1987; Went 1994). It is a need which parents and heads frequently fail to recognise (S.B.E. 1968; Fidge 1978b).

Often the recognition of a need comes by the child expressing the need, by asking questions. In sex matters, there is evidence that pressures of social conformity influence a child to stop asking questions (Calderone 1969; Fidge 1978, 1987a; Goldman and Goldman 1982), and this lack of 'proof' could be sufficient for some heads (and adults generally) to conclude that there is no need for sex education. Children's perceptions of the difficulties many adults have in giving sex information, has long been recognised in the literature and explains their reluctance to ask (De Kok 1935). Advice to counter this is also long established.

Young children's hidden worries and fears about sex (Chanter 1966) need to be countered by giving the facts. A Purdue Poll found that 88% of young people wanted more sex information (Manley 1968). Even young children (4 - 6yrs) do not need 'infantile sexual concepts' as they are fully capable of understanding 'ordinary' sexual information (Kreitler and Kreitler 1966). Chanter (1966) reported children's 'desire' for sexual information, and Linner (1972) their 'desperate' need, all of which imply the importance of meeting the need (Siedlecky 1987).

Children do not want childish nonsense or damaging silence:

" Why are they not told that their mothers carry and bear them, instead of being filled up with ridiculous falsities about storks ?"
Wollstonecraft (1792).

" Boys and girls need the truth, the right answers and factual knowledge to counteract the fantasies and half truths they are getting from their peers and the mass media."
Manley (1964).

" Young people who find out about sex from their friends are more likely to be dissatisfied with this method of learning compared to those who learnt from parents or school..... They have a need for information to be provided by adults at an early enough stage so that young people can feel confident that they know the 'facts' and can use them as a basis for fuller discussions with friends and other adults."
Farrell (1978).

Children say they need sex education at school (Schofield 1965, 1973; Fidge 1978a; Allen 1987) and their needs are internationally reported by many educationalists and researchers (Burke 1970). It is for schools to recognise these needs and implement a responsible curriculum that addresses them (Hirst 1974; Lenderyou 1993). Young people today need sex education to help them make sense of the information they get from society (Menzies 1971; Massey 1988).

Some contributors to this debate suggest very specific needs which should be met, and detailing some of these will illustrate the wide range of topics which are regarded as appropriate. .

" ...need help... to determine their solutions to problems in the light of their own goals and philosophy, within the context of the community's goals and values.
...opportunities to develop effective interpersonal relations.
...a specific basis for making meaningful moral judgments.
...to think in advance of the consequences of their decisions.
...to participate in dialogue in the classroom.
Schulz and Williams (1968).

Many girls start their periods at primary school without help from their

parents (Leeson 1964; TES 1997a). Because of the worry, stress, anxiety, or guilt, which can accompany a child's first periods or wet dreams, due to ignorance (Chanter 1966; Goldman and Goldman 1988) there is a basic need to prepare children for puberty (Blisshen 1969; Went 1988a).

Children's awareness of themselves and their relationships is important:

" One of the most important things that a child must learn is to understand himself - his growth, his feelings, and his relationships and responsibilities to others."

Edwards (1967).

" It is essential that everything possible should be done to educate young people in human relationships while they are still at school."

Latey (1967).

The Latey Report (1967), added that children needed more instruction on the technical, emotional and moral problems of modern family life. Children should be regarded as having a right to responsible sex education (Calderone 1977; Beloff 1996) and this means their needs to receive truthful answers at any age on any topic; to learn about their development towards maturity; to learn the right vocabulary and expressions to use, and the need to reach adulthood free from fear, should be satisfied at home and in school (Braestrup 1970; Went 1988).

Children need information on adult sex-roles and gender issues (Farrell 1978). Children become aware of many sex-related issues like, rape, abortion, prostitution (Winn 1984) as well as normal sex information at a much earlier age, and not through sex education, which many are denied so:

" Whatever moral stand is taken on these matters, children are in need of enlightenment and guidance about sexuality much earlier than was thought necessary."

Goldman and Goldman (1982).

Children should be told what they want to know, not what adults think they should be told (Honey 1978). Musgrove (1964) felt that the contemporary social order and adult social attitudes were based on gigantic myths concerning the needs and nature of the young. Thirty years later that is still, largely true (Scott and Thomson 1992; Concern 1994; Haywood 1996).

Pirone (1969) saw children's needs differently to most:

" Dissenting from the usual view, I hold that about seventy percent of all children, do not need sex education, should not be exposed to any form of sex education, and are more hurt than helped by the information made available to them in even the best existing programs of sex education. Moreover I hold that the remaining thirty percent of the population require intensive homosexual education because their basic sex instincts are perverted. The range of perversion extends from the boy or girl who at puberty simply is not interested in the opposite sex to the frank, open and unabashed portion of society which is biologically midsexed..... I consider intensive homosexual education for midsexed children to be crucial in today's society."
Pirone (1969).

Few heads are likely to agree with him but many agree that children do not need sex education, at least not in the primary school (Davies 1993; Reiss 1995; Maitland 1997). The influence of 'children's needs' as a factor in their decision-making process may not seem very significant.

2.16 CHILDREN'S INTEREST

Goldman and Goldman (1982) describe children as being sexual thinkers from a very early age. Their term 'sexual' includes concepts of sex-roles, human differences, a child's sexual identity and preferences, sex facts about babies, gestation, puberty, etc., social responses to sexual matters, sources of information, experiences in sex education and so on. A wide, all-embracing definition and in these wide terms they say:

" We therefore define children's sexual thinking as 'thinking about' the broader area described above. It is evident from

previous research and our own findings that children, from a very early age are, by this definition, active sexual thinkers. Children's sexual thinking, learning and behaviour, may be described as subject to sexual socialisation from the moment of birth." Goldman and Goldman (1982).

Goldman and Goldman (1982) add that while a child's sexual thinking is biologically based, it is socially induced, and therefore influenced by different cultures and social circumstances (see also: Calderone and Johnson 1990). They suggested that because it had been thought that the child's sexual curiosity was stimulated by biological maturity there has been a tendency to leave sex education until adolescence. Bernstein (1973) said a child's understanding of procreation was more a function of cognition than physiological development.

Yarber (1979) reported that children were curious about sex, a characteristic which many recognise (Chance 1935; Bibby 1944; Chesser & Dawe 1945; Dawkins 1967; Pomeroy 1971; Dallas 1972; Fidge 1978a; Goldman and Goldman 1988). Chanter (1966) noted children's interest. Eppel and Eppel (1966) found children 'deeply' interested in personal relationships. Reiss (1968) saw children's interest in sexual matters as unstoppable. An interest in sex by junior-aged children is regarded as quite normal (Blishen 1969; S.B.C. 1971; Fawdry 1971; Went 1985; Granada 1997), except by Pirone (1969), who claimed that a normal child had little interest in sex. There is evidence in the wide and varied questions children ask or the topics of conversation or discussion they engage in to support the notion of children's sexual interest (Ottaway 1935; Bibby 1948; Kenner 1969; S.B.C. 1971; Fidge 1978a; Hughes 1981; Massey 1990). Further support is shown by the wide variety of topics children discuss with friends (Farrell 1978; Allen 1987; Granada 1997) and the relatively high place they

give 'sex' in health education topics they want to learn about (Balding 1979).

Children's sexual interest is shown by their requests for sex education and information at school (Dawe 1935; Manley 1964; Schulz and Williams 1968; Menzies 1971; Allen 1987) or reports that they would have appreciated earlier or more detailed sex education than they received (Schofield 1965; Eppel and Eppel 1966; Holmes 1968; Sjoval 1970; Burke 1970; Crowther-Hunt 1976; Yarber 1979).

As children are sexual thinkers from a very early age they will demonstrate their interest by what they talk and ask about and if children are denied answers to their questions, they will formulate their own explanations and assumptions (Kreitler and Kreitler 1966; Rogers 1974; Goldman and Goldman 1982; Ray and Went 1995), many of which will be erroneous. Children will display their interest to those adults they perceive as sympathetic. But for 'children's interest' to be a factor of influence on some heads it is probable that their perception and appreciation of this factor might have to be secured in ways other than from the children themselves since children hide their sexuality from those they perceive to be unsympathetic.

2.17 CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES

In the late 1960s Bjork (1969) declared that the biggest change in young people was not their overt sexual behaviour, but their attitudes towards sex. Children's sexual attitudes affect their behaviour and the inculcation of acceptable attitudes generally considered a major concern of schools. Wrong attitudes to sex by individual pupils may cause a head

grave concern (see also TES 1998):

" But so serious a matter can hardly be dealt with in terms of what to do afterwards; you (as head RF) may have to consider the whole field of education in personal relationships..... this is increasingly your concern and your responsibility as more and more parents abdicate from theirs."

Edmonds (1968).

Concerning the question of whether heads' awareness of children's sexual attitudes influenced sex education decisions, Edmonds (1968) thought there would be a response since they would perceive the need to do something about correcting wrong attitudes.

Children's attitudes, formed and maintained through a range of influences, conformed to group norms (Rigby 1962), filtered down from older children (Reiss 1968) and were adversely affected by the teenage 'market' and the mass media (L.C.C 1964; Irwin 1977; Daily Telegraph 1996). Most importantly, children's attitudes are influenced by their parents (Goldman and Goldman 1988; Calderone and Johnson 1990) and while good attitudes are said to be established through supportive family life (Burke 1970), poor attitudes are not:

" From our earliest experience ten years ago parents have been found to play a minimal role, and often the very inadequate information they may give, and the manner in which it is given merely precipitates wrong attitudes in the young who try to broaden their knowledge by other, not always reputable means."

Menzies (1971).

The peer group is seen as the only source of uninhibited exchange of sexual information and experiences and though children may have had necessary information provided at an early age, peer group interaction provides the opportunity to explore attitudes and feelings and is a factor in the modification and development of them (Farrell 1978; Balding 1994).

Difficulties achieving certain sex information goals due to inhibiting attitudes could be modified through education (Rainwater 1960). Often poor sex attitudes are found in the lower socio-economic section of the population who also have negative attitudes to school and do not fully benefit from it (Hargreaves 1967; Bernstein 1971; Farrell 1978). On the whole, primary aged pupils, who found sex an interesting, exciting and important subject (Reiber 1964), showed responsible attitudes to sex education in school (S.B.C. 1971; Fidge 1978a; Went 1985) but not all heads perceived children to be capable of sensible attitudes (Fidge 1978b).

Children's sex attitudes develop early (Fleming 1963; H.E.C. 1973):

" Attitudes towards human sexuality develop during the child's early life, and tend to remain with him throughout life."

Schulz and Williams (1968).

They are conditioned by parents through example, explanation and reprimand (B.C.C. 1966; Calderone and Johnson 1990). Healthy sex attitudes develop from warm, non-repressive family relationships (Burke 1970), but where attitudes of disgust, shame and undue stress on personal appearance has been experienced, children's attitudes can be very negative (Fleming 1963).

Many children associate the subject of sex with concepts of it being 'rude' or 'dirty'. Concepts of shame, especially among working class children (Dawe 1935), suggested the need to overcome such attitudes as a basic aim of sex education. In addressing an early conference on sex education, Dennett (1935) reminded her adult audience of the attitudes of shame and fear they may have had as children, and looked forward to the future generations as having shed such attitudes through sex education.

Reports of children expressing notions of 'naughtiness', 'rudeness' and 'dirtiness' with sex matters, have remained commonplace and suggest that such attitudinal issues need correcting (Manley 1964; Newson and Newson 1968; Elias and Gebhard 1969; Farrell 1978; Goldman and Goldman 1982) through education (Chanter 1966; Eppel and Eppel 1966; S.B.C. 1971).

Many children develop negative attitudes through the 'taboo effect' (Neumark 1995; H.P.A.N.I. 1996; Harris R. 1996) which is evident through parents' and teachers' attitudes and forms one of the reasons Chanter (1966) listed supporting a case for primary sex education.

" Roughly from the age of seven the child finds himself encompassed by silence and inhibitions concerning that most interesting of all human studies, the knowledge of oneself - the how and the why."
Chanter (1966).

Children were aware of adult embarrassment and unwillingness in response to their curiosity (S.B.C. 1971), and 8 yr. olds were conscious that sex was a taboo subject which was better not broached in adult company (Fawdry 1971; Bridgerman 1996). Sex education does not necessarily provide the antidote to this problem. If those who provide it are not careful, it can simply reinforce the notion of 'taboo' which children already have acquired:

" ..recent trends towards increasing sex education in the school system..ought to be encouraged..it is equally important that such programmes be subjected to the most critical scrutiny.. Too quickly, programmes can become the empty rituals that serve to lessen the anxieties of parents and educators and, at the same time, only reinforce the children's and adolescents' already well-developed belief in the unhealthy and hypocritical posture of adults towards sex."

Gagnon and Simon (1973).

Goldman and Goldman (1982), reported that the 'taboo effect' which children developed from their experience of adult attitudes to sex affected children's attitudes when asked to discuss certain sex topics with researchers,

in particular such topics as nudity and their parents' sexuality.

Moral attitudes in children, as they relate to sexual matters, also raise issues which would need to be considered by heads in regard to sex education provision. Today, moral codes are less firmly drawn (Concern 1994) and the difficulties that arise when dealing with concepts of right and wrong are not always easy to handle, or 'risk free' (N.C.W.G.B. 1984). Moral issues are said to cause anxiety, concern, conflict and uncertainty for children (Reiss 1995). Rigby (1962) contended that children accept the moral codes, good or bad, of the group to which they belong, and sometimes are faced with conflict over which course of action to follow.

" There is much throughout this research that points to a genuine concern with moral problems and moral conflict. Some of the concern undoubtedly involves relationships with the opposite sex, and the problems of understanding and handling sexual feelings."

Eppel and Eppel (1966).

Some of the conflicts with which young people contend are illustrated in the research into children's attitudes, by Harris (1968), and from the responses recorded, there seemed to be some apparently contradictory situations. Gilligan et al. (1971) suggested sexuality was an area where young people begin to question conventional definitions of right and wrong. In communicating moral values and sexual ethics to children, many of whom already have very fixed attitudes in these matters, many teachers might be perplexed at what is moral (Ray and Went 1995), particularly when an official definition of moral education is 'education about appropriate behaviour in our society today' (N.C.W.G.B. 1984). An examination of changing sexual ethics (e.g. Dominian 1977; Winn 1984), an understanding of some of the moral difficulties facing children today (Plaskow 1992; TES

1993) and the potential difficulties which could arise are reflected in children's sexual attitudes.

Certain attitudes cause conflict, particularly across the generation gap, and at the primary level, while very little copulative activity is likely, certain overt sexual behaviour is evident, and discussing attitudes could be problematic or confrontational for some adults. From the changing attitudes to pre-marital sex reported by Wright and Cox (1967) and Wright (1971), who found no support for the commonly held belief that young people condoned an increase in promiscuity, but the link between intercourse and marriage had weakened against a strengthening of the link between intercourse and love (Coleman and Hendry 1990). Kirk (1967) reported attitudes from 14 year olds that it was acceptable to have sex if you were close friends. Other research showed that 61% of 14 year olds regarded 'going steady' as a sufficient basis for intercourse, with only 6% adhering to the principle of abstinence during adolescence; these attitudes did not correlate in any way to the amount of sex education received (S.O.U. 1969c). Harris (1968) found that 64% of boys wanted to marry a virgin; that only 35% boys thought sex before marriage was wrong; and over 80% of both boys and girls thought they should be taught about contraception. Farrell (1978) found that 60% boys and 37% girls, approved of sex before marriage. Pre-marital sex is almost universally accepted (N.N.N.A.L. c1994).

In 1977 1:500 girls in the 11-15yr age group became pregnant (N.C.O.P.F./C.D.T. 1979) and the issue of teenage pregnancy is currently seen as a phenomenon which needs to be reduced through sex education (DOH 1991).

Another important aspect of children's attitudes concerns gender and sex-role issues (Lenderyou 1993). Hargreaves (1976) found that younger children (top infant age) were quite open about kissing/chasing games and current boy/girl friends, but older juniors were noted to make very little comment and maintain a distant relationship with the opposite sex (see also Goldman and Goldman 1988).

" Although the traditional pattern of relationships between the sexes is changing rapidly, research findings support the stereotyped views held by our two groups of children. There are clearly defined patterns of behaviour which are seen as appropriate for each sex and these are perceived and acted upon, even at the pre-school level."

Hargreaves (1977).

Goldman and Goldman (1982) found that aversion to the opposite sex during childhood changed with maturity and biological need. The child's perception of parents' sex-roles can influence development (Andry 1960) and although most children saw marriage as a pre-requisite for having children, few related sex with marriage (Goldman and Goldman 1982). The majority of 12 year olds wanted to get married and have children (Clatour and Moore 1969) but child-rearing was seen as a female role (Goldman and Goldman 1982).

The majority of children have positive attitudes towards receiving sex education (Allen 1987). Most said that they preferred receiving it from home as well as school though they acknowledged that many parents failed them in this regard (Fidge 1978a). Children's sexual attitudes cover wide ranging issues. The attitudes they bring to the school will need sensitive handling to produce the kind of responsible attitudes most education aims for.

2.18 CHILDREN'S COMMUNICATION

Schools were advised to aim at developing communication on sexual matters between children and parents (U.N.E.S.C.O. 1965; Went 1994). Open discussion was essential (Calderone 1966) and heads were urged to consult with staff to consider what opportunities might be made for pupils 'to discuss freely some of the perplexities that beset young people today' (LCC 1964). Ferber and Sofokidis (1966) found that pupils wanted improved communication about sex matters. The fluency and quality of children's discussion in school depended on the adequacy of preparation and the relationship developed between the teacher, children and parents (SBC 1971).

Curry (1934) recognised that children needed to talk about sex to avoid developing notions of shame. If children did not experience discussing sex matters when they were young problems would develop when they were in their teens (B.C.C.1966; Proops 1971). Some observations of children's verbal communication showed it was wide-ranging, sensible, frank and on the increase. Youngsters spoke more about all dimensions of sex than ever before (Bjork 1969; Calderone and Johnson 1990). The content of their conversation ranged from facts to moral issues (S.B.C. 1971). Kreidler and Kreidler (1966) found that very young children were well informed about sex differences and could speak freely about them.

Children's enquiries about sex led to understanding and respect for 'the facts of life' (C.A.C.E. 1967). Many questions children asked were aimed at clarifying the meanings of words in relation to sex matters and their discussions were frank (S.B.C. 1971). In investigating the nature of sexual meaning, Plummer (1975) suggested that only naming made things

sexual:

" The fundamental axiom of the interactionist approach is simply put: nothing is sexual but naming makes it so. Sexuality is a social construction learnt in interaction with others. This is not of course to deny the existence of genitals, copulation or orgasms as biological and universal 'facts'; it is simply to assert the sociological commonplace that these things do not have 'sexual meanings' in their own right: these have to be bestowed upon them through social encounters. The 'mind' has to define something as 'sexual' before it is sexual in its consequences." Plummer (1975).

Questions and discussion about aspects of growth, functions and workings of the human body which are a familiar part of daily life, are hindered by social conventions which make it difficult for children to explore their cognitive significance and create problems over the development of a proper vocabulary for sexual use (Goldman and Goldman 1982). Adults compounded this problem for children by the difficulties they experienced in deciding what was the 'right' vocabulary to use (Honey 1978; Goldman and Goldman 1988). The differences that arose from the socio-economic class children were in, concerning their verbal skills, vocabulary and attitudes in discussing sexual subjects, showed children in the lower classes to be disadvantaged (Newson and Newson 1968; Farrell 1978). Fortyfive years ago Gager (1953) warned of the need to dismantle the 'silence barrier', which with negative attitudes, like disgust or embarrassment, adversely affected children's development (see also: Fleming 1963; Goldman and Goldman 1988).

Waiting for children to ask about sex before giving them information is likely to be highly unsatisfactory (Chanter 1966), yet it was a position which was supported in the Plowden Report (C.A.C.E. 1967), marginally in preference to a formal scheme of sex education, and recognised by the Department of Education and Science as one method of providing an adequate

'policy' for the school (D.E.S. 1986). Children who do not ask, should be told (Van Gelderen 1935; Foster 1959; Disney 1971; Fidge 1978).

" The view that children should only be given information about sex in the form of answers to direct, spontaneous questions on the subject, does not stand up to critical examination... Children for various reasons are reluctant to ask on this subject."
S.B.E. (1968).

Harris (1969) reported that 60% of infant heads said that children never asked questions about sex. And those that do would not receive much information if all heads implemented the following advice:

" The normal child has little interest in sex. I would answer all difficult questions posed by a child from five to ten by a simple example. I would pick him up, embrace him and put him down again, then ask him to do the same for me. Then he would understand immediately that he cannot do as I do because he is not grown up. Then I would explain to him that before he can understand what sex is all about, he must grow up first."
Pirone (1969).

Jones (1977) said children needed to go over things again, asking questions, as they were often worried or confused about sex matters which they were aware of through various sources. Rather than questions promoting sex education (information), it was sex education that promoted, and encouraged children's questions and conversation (S.C.B. 1971). When children knew their questions would be answered, they asked without embarrassment (Chanter 1966; Went 1985).

Communication between parent and child was seen as defective (Eppel and Eppel 1966). Most parents found communication difficult, the problems experienced by parents are also found amongst some teachers (Bridgerman 1996). Perceptions of the status of child/adult communication are confused. Lorand (1969) and Farrell (1978), saw it quite natural for teenagers to be reluctant to discuss sex with their parents, while

Pickering (1965) said parents would find it easier to talk to children above the age of 12 years. Young people replied that they would sooner ask their parents (even though many knew they could not) (Harris 1968), while Kenner (1973) hypothesised that if children could not ask adults questions by 10 or 11, they were unlikely to do so. Burke (1970) observed that children could influence their parents through discussion arising from sex education. It was found that children spoke more easily to their teachers but after seeing the B.B.C. sex education films, improved levels of talk with parents were noted (S.B.C. 1971). Yet even now Parent/child talk can be difficult and embarrassing (Allen 1987; H.P.A.N.I. 1996; Clift et al 1996)

Children's communication with their peer group concerns several issues. Children said they learnt more from their friends than their parents (Harris 1968; Granada 1997). They talk more freely about sex within their peer group (Masters and Johnson 1968), but this was often inaccurate, clandestine sexual gossip (Wright 1968) which resulted in a confusing exchange of misinformation (Bjork 1969). Children's sexual talk in the peer group has been regarded as low and unrefined (Edwards 1900; Brewer 1962) but the peer group has a vital role:

"often they (friends RF) are the only source of the 'uninhibited' exchange of sexual information and experiences. Even if all the necessary information has been passed on by parents at an early age, most young people will still need to discuss this information and their experiences with friends in order to explore their attitudes and feelings."

Farrell (1978).

Whether heads act in response to the issues associated with children's communication will reflect the ways in which they see their children.

2.19 CHILDREN'S SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

If children are asexual in thought and behaviour and childhood is the age of innocence there is no need for sex education but if children engage in sexual thinking and behaviour these will need addressing. What heads believe about this fundamental premise will influence their decisions.

" This universal acceptance (of the centrality and importance of sex as a major fundamental human drive RF) would appear to exclude children..... Children are still largely regarded as asexual creatures in thought and behaviour, and childhood remains characterised as the age of innocence unaffected by any interest in sex."

Goldman and Goldman (1982).

This might be the belief of many heads who choose to leave children without any formal sex education before puberty. Are they unaware of children engaging in sexual thinking and behaviour and therefore see no need to address it, or aware of such aspects of child development but are affected by other pressures which are more demanding than the influence arising from children's sexual behaviour ? Many would not agree that children are sexless. Children do engage in sexual behaviour.

One such behaviour is masturbation. Adult ambivalence creates problems making it a topic some adults are uncomfortable dealing with. Almost all primary school sex education is heterosexual but many pre-pubescent boys and girls report homosexual play and many homosexuals were aware of their orientation from a very young age. The subject of teenage sex generates debate. Is it caused by sex education or the lack of it ? There is probably more pre-teen sexual activity than is acknowledged. Children's sexual investigation and experience usually precedes formal instruction

from either home or school.

In their study into children's sexuality and sexual learning, Elias and Gebhard (1969), defined 'sex play' amongst pre-pubertal children as being:

"...self stimulation of genitalia; exhibition of genitalia; a manual or oral manipulation of genitalia or exploration of, or by, other children."

Elias and Gebhard (1969).

The concept of sexuality embodied in this definition is in very physical terms and a narrower definition than that of Freud (1940) and Goldman and Goldman (1982) referred to above. It is not always possible to know what some authors mean when they refer to sex play, sexual behaviour and general sexual activity, except that each is declaring that the behaviour they are reporting has a particular sexual connotation as opposed to some non-sexual category. They are recognising the child to be a sexual being.

Manley (1964) reported parents were so concerned about the sexual behaviour of their children they were seeking help to deal with it. Earlier, Wertham (1955), in his study on the sexual nature and influence of the imagery (including cruelty or sado-masochism) of American comics upon children's sexual adjustment, said that the elaborate sexual fantasies many children have long before the age of puberty, is often overlooked (see also Goldman and Goldman 1988).

The sexual behaviour of young pre-pubescent children lacks the erotic interest of similar adult behaviour but is sexually valid nevertheless (Elias and Gebhard 1969), particularly as adolescent sexual behaviour is seen as a direct sequel to the behaviour and experiences of earlier phases

of growth and development (Fleming 1963). Patterns of sexual behaviour were related to such factors as educational and family background (Schofield 1965), but Elias and Gebhard (1969) suggested there was no connection between sexual behaviour and social class.

In the early 1920s, young people were encouraged to channel 'primitive' sexual urges into other activities so that healthy sex could be shared naturally when the right time came. One such activity was Rovering, which would provide lots to do 'instead of aimless loafing and smutty talks...' (Baden-Powell 1922). An earlier remedy to control the 'feverish' sex parts was a cold bath (Stall 1897). Lewis (1883) advised young people against the dangers of:

" ..overt acts.. lascivious fancies.. voluptuous visions.. the fever of which.. wears out the nervous system and emasculates manhood."

Lewis was also the inventor of a 'pocket card' which was used to divert children's sexual imaginings, and a letter from a grateful youth testifies to the efficacy of the device (Brewer 1962).

Possibly one of the most contentious aspects of children's sexual behaviour is masturbation. The Victorians had complex remedies to counter it (Fowler 1880; Thompson 1829; Brewer 1962; Dwyer 1973). Freeman (1935) accepted that medical opinion in some quarters was against him, still spoke out frankly against masturbation. In some cases in the 1930s the earlier notions of probable harm from masturbation were still around.

Ottaway (1935) showed a more liberal attitude and thought it an unsuitable topic for class discussion, but said it was often mentioned in private

talks. He explained it to pupils as scientifically and unemotionally as possible, without moralising, letting children decide for themselves. He emphasised the dangers of trying to stop masturbation by threats and lies, and the problems which could arise by making boys feel guilty or sinful.

Bibby (1944) saw no problems for younger children but alluded to mental complications for older boys, and remarked that girls appear to start masturbating earlier than boys. The 'mid-ground' was gradually shaped by commentators and researchers who declared masturbation harmless, except the guilt or anxiety generated by adults (Foster 1959; Schulz & Williams 1968). Schools were advised to reassure children that it would not harm them and was a natural part of growing up (L.C.C. 1964; Chanter 1966).

Goldman and Goldman (1982) stated the obvious when they related the beginnings of masturbation to babies playing with their genitals in an exploratory way. Masturbation is universally found and without ill effects (Irwin 1977; Goldman and Goldman 1982; Went 1985; Reiss 1995) and currently is often recommended and encouraged, particularly by efforts to avoid attaching negative concepts to it, either in writing about it or in informing children (Yates 1979; Docherty 1986). However Goldman and Goldman (1982) when revising their interview schedule, found that they had to exclude questions referring to children's understanding of the word 'masturbation' as it caused such embarrassment. They observed that this was a sad indication of the current state of communication about sexuality.

Bibby (1944) published some figures giving percentages for various degrees of masturbating. He reported finding only 34% of a group of 10½ year old boys who said they had never masturbated, of those who did, 10% said it was

a nightly occurrence and 27% masturbated once a week. He also reported average figures from several other sources showing about 21% of boys and 49% of girls who started masturbating before the age of 12. Ollendorff (1966), reported that 99% of all juveniles masturbate. Elias and Gebhard (1968) gave details of findings for different social classes. On average they said that 57% of boys and 30% girls masturbated by about the age of 10. According to socio-economic class, 60% - 70% of lower white collar and blue collar boys between 8 and 10 masturbate compared with 30% of upper white collar boys (who generally started by the age of 7). Similarly, 48% of lower blue collar girls, compared with between 25% - 29% of the other socio-economic groups, masturbated.

The adult ambivalence concerning masturbation creates problems (Gordon 1979; Calderone and Johnson 1990). Reporting that some churches and families regarded masturbation as morally wrong, Schulz and Williams (1968), reaffirmed that most medical and religious authorities regarded it as a natural development in the process of maturation, but Greenbank (1961) found considerable ignorance concerning masturbation among medical students. Although fewer parents punish children for masturbating, fewer still encourage it (Elias and Gebhard 1968; Yates 1978), and Goldman and Goldman (1982) found the traditional attitudes and a tendency to punish, or at least disapprove of masturbation, remained in Western societies.

The figures above and other studies like them indicate masturbation as a common activity, and one which is practised by most children from early childhood. From some of the findings it is clear the topic of masturbation is still a controversial one and many adults feel uncomfortable talking to

children about it. Where sex education is taught, one might find a more enlightened attitude these days (Mayle 1975; Vent 1985; Docherty 1986).. Though attitudes towards some aspects of sex education, such as masturbation, might dissuade some heads from implementing it.

The focus of primary school sex education is almost totally heterosexual to the exclusion of homosexual information, in spite of the fact that young children know about homosexuality and engage in some forms of homosexual behaviour. The fact that children indulge in homosexual play and experimentation (Breckenbridge and Vincent 1965; Kaplan 1978; Winn 1984) is problematic for some adults. Our sexuality is a crucial part of who we are and it is important to consider the needs of all pupils and their future development (Ray and Vent 1995) particularly as some of the children in our classes will not be heterosexual.

The homosexual behaviour remarked upon by Waugh (1917) in public schools has always been evident in single-sex residential establishments. Just what percentage of the incidents are a 'passing phase' or a reflection of a developing sexuality is not easy to judge. Advice from the L.C.C. (1964) was to assure young people of the 'adolescent homosexual phase' and to warn them of the dangers of 'casual contacts in public places'. Elias and Gebhard (1969) said that 52% of pre-pubescent boys reported homosexual play (average age 9.2 yrs.) as did 35% of pre-pubescent girls. 37% girls and 34% boys in the same study reported heterosexual play. Schulz and Williams (1968) referred to homosexuality in terms of deviance,

" In sexual development, as in many other areas of a person's life, difficult problems may arise. One of the most common problems is homosexuality."

Schulz and Williams (1968).

In the mid 1960s social attitudes to homosexuality, if not negative, tended towards concepts of prevention or cure and both Schur (1965) and Hooker (1965) reflected this position.

- " Preventive efforts (for homosexuality RF) should focus on:
- (1). Creating a climate of opinion that will allow homosexuality to be openly and reasonably discussed and objectively handled;
 - (2). Providing for adequate sex education of both parents and children, so that the homosexual can understand himself (sic) better and the community can free itself of its punitive attitudes toward all sexuality..."
- Hooker (1965).

" It seems likely that major alterations of social structure and culture would be necessary in order to reduce homosexuality to any significant degree."

Schur (1965).

These attitudes, current about the time of a reawakening of interest in primary school sex education in this country (Chanter 1966; C.A.C.E. 1967; Lane 1972), tended to keep the topic of both children's and adults' homosexuality off the sex education agenda, creating serious problems now (Green 1994; Haywood 1996; Mole 1996).

Confirmation by Elias and Gebhard (1969) of the frequency of homosexual play of children, major work to educate attitudes about the nature and incidence of juvenile homosexual experience (Ollendorff 1966) and other material (Hargreaves 1976; Irwin 1977; Gordon 1979; Goldman and Goldman 1982; Lenderyou 1993) has done little to alter the very uncomfortable attitudes regarding homosexual activity in both pre-pubertal and pubescent children (Alyson and others 1980; Trenchard and Warren 1984; Calderone and Johnson 1990).

Irwin (1977) asked for recognition of the fact that homosexuality was

common, and a satisfactory way of life to the majority of those, thus oriented. Gordon (1979) referred to the dangers of ignorance concerning homosexuality and recounted a young person's near-suicide attempt:

" We have allowed young people to self-diagnose their problems because we have not provided them with the information they need - that a few experiences, that thoughts and fantasies don't make a person homosexual. As far as we know, a person's sexual identity is determined before they are five years old, even before they go to school."

Gordon (1979).

Of the sexual characteristics of children's make up it was said:

" It seems that there are feminine components in the personalities of boys just as there are masculine components in the personalities of girls, and that alternative selves can be 'switched on' with remarkable ease and accuracy....."

Hargreaves (1976).

There is still controversy and ambivalence about homosexuality. It is widely recognised as an appropriate topic for primary sex education (Sanders and Stanford 1992; Lenderyou 1993; Ray and Went 1995; Cohen 1997) but continues to meet considerable opposition (Tingle 1986; Hart 1995; FYC 1997/8). In a recent (Christian) survey on young people's (11 years plus) beliefs and experiences, the section on sexual experiences contained no reference to homosexuality at all (Agape/C.R.A. 1997). While in another (Christian) teenagers' views on homosexuality showed that only between 18% to 34% held anti-homosexual views (C.T. 1997). In an earlier study of what heads thought appropriate for primary sex education content (Fidge 1988a) majority agreement was only reached at an uncontentious level (not to include masturbation, homosexuality, teen-age sex etc.).

The issues of teenage sexual activity are often seen in terms of the 'cause and effect' arguments, socio-economic factors and response to societal factors. Pre-teen sexual activity is relatively unrecognised by many

adults. Children's sexual activity and behaviour is influenced by a variety of factors. Farrell (1978) found that sexual experience was a function of maturity rather than peer group membership. One common criticism levelled at sex education is that it encourages promiscuity (Whelan 1995; FYC 1997/8a) but it could be argued that promiscuity was due to too little knowledge rather than too much (Chanter 1966; Collyer 1995; Gillham 1997). There seems some evidence that children's sexual activity or behaviour is not affected by sex education (Rogers 1974; Zelnik and Kim 1982; Reid 1982). Farrell (1978) found that there was no direct link between sexual behaviour and learning about sex from parents because learning was part of a total cultural pattern. Having a religious faith or not did not significantly affect sexual activity (C.T. 1997) and Farrell (1978) reported that 46% of sexually active pupils belonged to a religious faith. Earlier, Schulz and Williams (1968) found the divergence between children's actual sexual behaviour and their perceptions of their personal and societal moral codes, with an increasing awareness of the 'double standard' caused confusion for many (Massey 1990; Concern 1994).

Loeb (1959) had found that children with appropriate sex roles, were less likely to eventually engage in pre-marital sex but there was probably far more pre-teen sexual activity occurring than many heads would acknowledge. Broderick (1966a) observed that children's sexual investigation and experience usually preceded formal instruction from either home or school. Schulz and Williams (1968) reported the pressures on young people to engage in sexual activity well before marriage, coming from the mass media and adult attitudes. It was found that most lower class boys had attempted coitus before puberty (Elias and Gebhard 1969). More children from lower

socio-economic classes had a higher rate of sexual experience/activity than those of the middle-upper groups (Venner et al 1972; Zelnik and Kantner 1972; Farrell 1978). Although interpersonal and heterosexual relations between pre-adolescents were starting much earlier and becoming more liberal, old patterns of hostility and withdrawal between the sexes at the beginning of puberty were still discernible (Broderick and Fowler 1961).

Probation officers and youth leaders said that sexual activity played a larger part in the lives of young people than it did in previous generations (Eppel and Eppel 1966). In the mid 1960s, most children seemed to have had their first serious heterosexual contacts between the ages of 12 - 14 (Schofield 1968). Braestrup (1970) suggested that in most developed countries sexual activity started at an age approaching biological maturity.

There was evidence of sexual activity from about the age of 10 (Wiseman 1976; Goldman and Goldman 1988). Boys become sexually active sooner than girls (Zelnik and Kantner 1972; Farrell 1978). There is considerable evidence for claiming that quite young children (i.e aged 13 or less) are sexually active (Venner et al 1972; Holmstedt 1974; Goldman and Goldman 1982). The Church Army reported requests for help from 11 year old mothers (School Girl Mothers 1982).

Most primary schools still do not have a sequential sex education programme throughout their age range, and therefore such sexual activity by pre-teens (Winn 1984; TES 1998) is engaged in without any, or much sex education.

2.20 CHILDREN'S KNOWLEDGE

Sex information and knowledge is as important to human sexual growth and development as any other information is to any kind of human behaviour (Wagner 1973). Children need to gain that knowledge from a reliable source (Jones A. 1977; Ray and Went 1995). Although the child is a recipient of vast amounts of sex information coming from many different sources, the timing when the child learns particular facts, feelings and attitudes, can determine its usefulness (Farrell 1978). Conn (1947) concluded that sex information was beyond the grasp of children of 7 to 8 years old but many researchers/educationists have shown that very young children are able to understand and be interested in sex information (Bibby 1944; Pickering 1965; Kreidler and Kreidler 1966; Reiss 1968; Moore and Kendall 1971; S.B.C. 1971; Bernstein 1973; H.E.C. 1973; Farrell 1978; Goldman and Goldman 1982). To be of value, sex information needs to be appropriate and relevant (Farrell 1978) which raises issues of a developmental nature, like whether children have sequential sexual thought development (Goldman and Goldman 1982).

Farrell (1978) said that experience was important in learning about sex, and referred to the difficulties children had in preparing for the physical and emotional reactions involved in expressing their sexuality; particularly in sex-repressive societies such as ours (Ollendorff 1974; Saunders and Stanford 1992). Plummer (1975) referred to three crucial factors in developing sexual meaning, self-interaction; peer-interaction and media-interaction: which enabled children to understand previously 'un-named sexual encounters' retrospectively. The acquisition of knowledge is shaped by personal experience and observation (Farrell 1978) which are

received or performed in different circumstances and are subject to a variety of factors within and outside the child's control. The sex-learning process is as varied and random as other learning processes.

I would suggest that the three main factors which affect the nature and quality of a child's sexual knowledge are its:

- a. Source. b. Content. c. Timing.

Questions concerning these factors arise when the inclusion of sex education in the junior school curriculum is being considered.

The kind of questions concerning the issue of SOURCE include:

1. From what source is the child receiving information ?
2. Is it appropriate or reliable ?
3. What effect does the receipt of information from certain sources have upon the child ?
4. Are children's perceptions of the information affected by the source it comes from ?
5. Should those responsible for the child's well-being, ensure that information is provided from an appropriate source ?

Questions concerning CONTENT might include:

6. How does one know the content of a child's sexual knowledge at any given time ?
7. Is there 'appropriate content' for children or does the child 'decide' on what is appropriate by asking ?
8. Will all children in class be able to understand the information ?
9. Who should decide the information content ?
10. What are the issues of vocabulary ?

Consideration of TIMING might include such questions as:

11. Are children 'learning' about sex all the time ?
12. Is some information essential for a child 'by a certain time' ?
13. Is there an age when children should start learning about sex ?
14. Who decides the best time for sex education (either formal or informal) to take place ?

The concept of a reliable source is not as simple as one might think.

Parents are seen as the natural and proper source from whom children should

get their information, but the majority of them fail to fulfil that role. Some think school has a basic role in a child's sexual development as it has in other areas of the child's development, or a role in meeting the child's needs which are not met by parents. But these roles can only be fulfilled if sex education is on the curriculum. Where it is not it might be presumed the head does not perceive the school to have such a role.

Any source delivering accurate, reliable, and appropriate information, when it is needed, is exactly what the child requires but if that source is seen to be beyond adult control they would be anxious of it and likely to see it as potentially unreliable. The 'peer group' is probably the most common source of information but also the most criticised. For most children, the 'peer group' is the forum where they can speak freely about sex matters and it could be a very reliable source. In an early study the peer group was more than twice as common as 'parents/ family' (29:13) and three times greater than either 'school' or 'mass media' (29:10:10). But factors other than numerical frequency are significant in determining which sources children use, or have available to them. Apart from 'school' (compulsory where this research was conducted), 'parents', 'contemporaries' and 'books' were found to be common popular sources, but at the top of the list for girls it was 'parents' and for boys it was 'contemporaries' (S.O.U. 1969b).

A comparative study of some surveys of sex information sources (F.P.I.S. 1974) showed the substantial frequency of the 'peer group' category, and also referred to some of the factors which affect which sources are accessed by children, like the child's sex; the socio-economic class and the mass media. American comic books were found to be a bad influence on

a child's sexual development (Wertham 1955), yet it is the very comic book format which has been found to be a most positive way of communicating with some children (W.C.C.R. pre 1976; Curtis 1976; I.C.A.F. 1979).

Farrell's (1978) comparison of her results with those of Schofield (1965) shows an increase in the number of sexually inexperienced teenage boys saying that they had some sex education at school (44% to 58%) though the figures for the same category of girls is about the same (60% to 61%). While this slight increase in school sex education is probably indicative of slightly more sex education in the secondary sphere, it is unlikely to reflect much, if any increase in primary sex education at that time.

In Ripley's et al (1971) study, the level of first year secondary pupils giving 'teachers' as their main source, boys = 14.5% : girls = 19.3%, compared with fourth year secondary pupils, boys = 25.7% : girls = 30.1%, suggests an increase in sex education as pupils pass through their secondary careers, and a level of primary sex education at not more than an average of about 15%.

Fidge (1978a) in his responses from first year secondary pupils (aged 11 - 12), found 43% boys and 44% girls said they got some of their sex information from school but as many of their primary schools did not have formal sex education this could have meant from books, projects, school friends, individual teachers, a single showing of say, the B.B.C. material, or an established sex education programme. It did not reflect a substantial increase in primary sex education, but was indicative of some, resulting from interest in the late 1960s and early 1970s, since in a

parallel study researching parents' attitudes (Fidge 1978), based on all primary schools from which pupils in the 1978a study came, only 24% of the schools reported sex education on the curriculum.

Farrell (1978) found the mean age for learning about reproduction was 10 years (girls) and 10.3 years (boys) very few of whom would have learned first from 'school' but rather from 'friends'. Farrell (1978) said that over the ten years leading up to her study the mean age for learning about reproduction had fallen by 2 years. That seems a trend which has continued.

Up to the early 1980s there seemed little likelihood of the school becoming the main source of sex information for primary children. A summary of surveys (to 1982) of main information source (see Table 2) placed 'peer group/ friends' first (49%), with 'parents' (30%) second 'books' (27%) third and 'teachers/school' (15%) fourth. The position of sex education in primary schools was ambivalent as may be seen from a report by H. M. Inspectors (D.E.S. 1983a), of health education in some primary schools in Cornwall, which seemed to suggest an increase in sex education provision:

" 3.7 Sex education featured incidentally in the curriculum of most schools. Almost all staff said that questions from pupils on this aspect were dealt with as they occurred."
(D.E.S. 1983a). 1

But many teachers and heads say they have never been asked any sex questions by children throughout their careers (Fidge 1978b). The Inspectors continued:

" With one exception, studies of the human body did NOT (my emphasis) include the reproductive organs. Frequently the community policeman or policewoman talked to the children and showed the film 'Never Go With Strangers'. In view of the fact that most children did not receive specific sex education in school, this warning was tenuous and puzzling."

" Several schools had discussed sex education at parents' meetings and some schools reported that there was a general reluctance on the part of parents for this to be included in the curriculum."

" 7.5 There were few instances of sex education taking place in the schools....."

(D.E.S. 1983a).

The opening words of paragraphs 3.7 and 7.5 give rather different pictures of the position of primary sex education in the schools of this area.

In another H.M.I. survey (D.E.S. 1986c) of 11 schools with junior-aged pupils, all met the 1980 Education Act requirement to declare whether or not there was sex education in the curriculum. Two schools said they had sex education (taught by outside speakers) but in only one was it in fact taught. Sex education was still regarded with considerable hesitancy.

Manley (1964) found 88% pupils wanted more sex education. Most pupils would like more sex education at school (Schofield 1965; Fidge 1978a; Farrell 1978; Pearson and Lambert 1978; Allen 1987).

A considerable range of sex information sources has been identified by children, from generalised societal factor, to graffiti in public toilets, pop songs, playing cards (Fidge 1978a; Granada 1997).

Schofield (1965) found two thirds of boys and a quarter of girls learned nothing from their parents. Elias and Gebhard (1969) found most blue collar boys learned from their friends while most white collar boys said they got their information from their parents. Ripley et al (1971) reported just over half the boys (55.2 %) gave friends as their first source of information and just under half the girls (44.9 %) gave parents

as theirs. In a study with respondents from five West European countries (including Britain), Van Keep / Erlich (1972) reported that by the age of 13, most girls knew basic sex information details, but 57% said the information came from informal sources and only 24% said it came from parents or teachers.

Where studies differentiated between mothers and fathers as sources of information (Farrell 1978; Fidge 1978a) it was seen that fathers had very little input. Elias and Gebhard (1969) found that the mother played the main sex information role, but that even with the mother and the teacher in combination they never formed the main information source for the majority of children.

Sjovall (1970), reported that half of Swedish children said they got no information from their parents at all. Given the many references in the literature to the inadequacy of parents in sex educating their children, it is to be expected that they would rate low in the sources of information tables. Where children gave 'parents' as their source of information and no differentiation was asked for, most would mean 'mother'.

Schofield (1973) found that males preferred to learn from teachers and females from their mothers, though both boys and girls (about 60 % each) said they learnt from their peer group. Farrell (1978) not unsurprisingly found that most girls learn about menstruation from their mothers. One could hypothesise that boys would not similarly find out about the spermarche from their fathers, but rather the peer group.

When parents were asked to give their judgment of the sources for their children's sex information, their replies were inconsistent with the literature (Fidge 1978).

Table 1. Source of Children's Sex Information Perceived by Their Parents (Fidge 1978)..

| Source of Information | No. Of Times Chosen | Percentage Of Parents |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Parents | 102 | 81.0 % |
| Friends | 99 | 78.6 % |
| Television | 95 | 77.0 % |
| School | 71 | 56.3 % |
| Siblings | 66 | 52.4 % |
| Newspaper | 46 | 36.5 % |
| Books | 43 | 34.1 % |
| Magazine | 31 | 24.6 % |
| Others | 8 | 6.3 % |

Parents saw themselves as the main source of sex information for their children followed by Friends, Television, School and Siblings . This runs counter to the rest of the evidence and raises important issues. Firstly, if parents think they occupy this position they do not see themselves as failures and therefore are not likely to address the problems of their inadequacy. Secondly, this could mean other adults, particularly teachers have a similar high regard for their provision of children's sex information and also fail to see that this is not the case. This would have important implications for the implementation of sex education.

Much of the specific data in individual studies of the sources for sex information share common trends, even if they do not always closely reflect similar percentage ranges. These trends could be summarised:

| Source | Boys | Girls | Average / Both |
|----------------------|--------|--------|----------------|
| Peer Group / Friends | 63.5 % | 49.6 % | 48.8 % |
| Parents | 23.7 % | 37.5 % | 29.8 % |
| Books | 27.0 % | 31.0 % | 27.4 % |
| Teachers / School | 18.6 % | 22.3 % | 15.3 % |

Table 2. Main Sex Information Sources based on the findings from various surveys up to 1982.

Middle class girls were found to be more likely to learn sex facts before other categories of children (Schofield 1965). Upper class children were found to have a superior knowledge of sex information compared to their lower class children (Elias and Gebhard 1969). Finding that upper class parents communicated more freely on sex matters with their children, Elias and Gebhard (1969) reported that 75% girls and 48 % boys of such families give their mother as their prime source of information compared with lower class children. The reverse trend is reported for the peer group as the source of information, with fewer upper class children, compared to lower class children giving peers as their main source of information

As a measure of sexual attitude, the degree of nudity in homes was related to social class, there being less tolerance for nudity in lower class homes (Newson and Newson 1966; Elias and Gebhard 1969) and in terms of 'shyness' a similar situation was found linked to socio-economic status (Fidge 1978a). Continued shyness over nudity was also reported more recently (Goldman and Goldman 1988).

The concept of undesirable sources has long been evident. Victorian and Edwardian values deemed ignorance a virtue and there are many references in early novels and autobiographies of women being ignorant up to their wedding night (Bell 1900; O'Brien 1900; McCarthy 1900; Stopes 1918; Brewer

1962; Crow 1971; Hall 1978). Information passed on by peers was portrayed as lewd (Farrar 1858). In the late 19th century, middle class girls whose mothers were silent, learnt all the female folklore of birth and marriage from the servants, in fact it was reported that for upper class children:

" Servants, rather than parents, were the sex instructors of most children; the maid was often prepared to take her boy pupils on from theory to practice."

(Brewer 1962).

The need for a desirable source is seen in De Kok's (1935) advice to parents to tell their children before they go to school to pre-empt any undesirable sources which might influence them. Children, frustrated and wronged by minimal parental input, turned to less reputable means to find out (Menzies 1971; Granada 1997). It was not thought ideal for children to receive sex information from their peers because of the false or mis-information that was given or exchanged. But the situation need not be detrimental. The peer group has long been recognised as a primary source (Exner 1915; Gagnon and Simon 1973, Goldman and Goldman 1982) and can be an effective strategy in sex education (Ray and Went 1995).

By the age of 9 or 10, Blunn (1973) recalled the taboo effect which sex information acquired as he picked up bits and pieces from his class mates and was told nothing by his parents. Farrell (1978) pointed to the secretive and guilty way in which children often perceived the provision of sex information by their peer group. Schofield (1965) found that most boys and many girls learnt about conception from their friends, usually through smutty and obscene jokes. Manley (1964) maintained that children needed sex education at school to counteract the fantasies, and half truths that they were getting from peers and the mass media. Chanter (1966), felt that:

" The child learns from his companions that certain matters are not discussed openly because they are 'dirty', yet there are many questions he would like to ask."

Chanter (1966).

Masters and Johnson (1968) realised an important feature of peer input:

" The kids spread a lot of fallacies and misconceptions - but they have one thing going for them: they learn to talk about sex."

Masters and Johnson (1968).

Schofield (1973) found that young people rejected the idea that learning from the peer group was the best way to pick up information, that they did so was due to adult failure to provide a better method. Farrell (1978) reported children saying that learning from the peer group was not the best way. There are aspects of peer provision which are not wholly negative:

" The continued advantage of peer groups as sources of sex education is that they can do what very few schools can begin to do -- relate sexual learning to sexual experience."

(Gagnon and Simon 1973).

The peer group also acts as a discussion agency and where school does not provide sex education, the peer group becomes a necessity.

"since it has been shown that many parents find it difficult to carry out this task, an alternative approach would be to try to ensure that if friends do provide information, they provide accurate information. This can only be done by presenting basic information at an early age."

(Farrell 1978)

If more children received sex education at school the peer group would become a very accurate and reliable source of information or used within the school policy the peer group could enhance sex education provision.

There is still confusion over where children get their main sex information. Balding (1994) found that a third of boys and nearly half the girls (aged 11 - 12) gave their parents as their main source of

information though this dropped off by the time these children were 15. But Allen (1987) found that while teenagers recognised their peer group as not an ideal source, that is where they turned first for information.

One reason for sex education in school is to correct children's distorted, inaccurate sex knowledge as a service to the individual and society. That this seems necessary in school is due largely to the inability of the parents to fulfil their role of providing their children with appropriate sex information as they develop. The inadequate state of children's knowledge has long been recognised:

" Although there exists a widespread recognition that parents have a prior responsibility to give this knowledge, it is evident that a substantial proportion do not in fact do so, and many schools have felt it their duty, therefore, to undertake the very important task of making good the inadequate and distorted knowledge possessed by many children."
(Board of Education 1943).

Elias and Gebhard (1969) saw a large proportion of children's mislabelled, incorrect knowledge as the product of their 'pooled ignorance' compounded by 'adult non-communication'. Increased peer sex talk results in a confusing exchange of misinformation (Bjork 1969). The subject matter of letters from very young teenagers - boys and girls - to the agony columns of their teen magazines illustrates the level of confusion, ignorance, guilt and worry over such matters as orgasm, homosexuality, masturbation and so on (Proops 1971; Rayner 1979; Owen 1997; TES 1997).

" As one might expect the range and admixture of knowledge, myth and fantasy, are very wide and the whole is characterised by disconnectedness - bits and pieces of information picked up in various ways and places, and frequently misunderstood and wrongly interpreted."

(S.B.C. 1971).

Lord Beaumont of Whitley (Beaumont 1976), expressed concern that survey after survey, showed considerable sexual ignorance among the young. The denial of honest answers leads children to invent their own explanations of what they observe and experience and this development of a body of children's sexual myth is circulated, increasing the problems of misinformation (Elias and Gebhard 1969; Farrell 1978; Goldman and Goldman 1982). To stop its spread or to see that the inevitable information exchange in the peer group is accurate, could influence heads' sex education decisions.

Many adults express surprise at what young children know about sex (Went 1994). The realisation that children already know a great deal about sex and that sex education in school will rarely touch upon matters they do not already have an inkling about might also influence heads' decisions. When adults begin to discover what children already know, it becomes clear that they are 'ready', or 'not too young', for sex education (Collyer 1995).

Pereira (1949) found that many children knew the facts of life before the age of 12 (before puberty) knowledge coming 'from the streets'. Kreidler and Kreidler (1966) showed that children from different cultures from the age of 4 had developed well defined theories for the origins of babies and had a good knowledge of physical sex differences. They were able to communicate their ideas about sex frankly, were well informed, and for the most part were able to give explanations for various sex processes or roles.

Kreidler's and Kreidler's (1966), findings

either refuted, or deviated considerably from the postulations of both Freud and Piaget.

" As a result of this research it can no longer be claimed that insufficient causal thinking (Piaget) of infantile libidinal development (Freud) hinder the adequate sexual enlightenment of the children. Therefore there is no reason to encourage children in forming 'infantile' sexual concepts through offering them false or defective information."

(Kreitler and Kreitler 1966).

Children in Sweden knew about contraception by about the age of 13 (S.O.U. 1969a), and 'quite young' British children also knew about contraception (D.E.S. 1977). Farrell (1978) advised that children from the age of 10 should be taught about contraception and birth control. With the call from the Parliamentary Health Select Committee for sex education to be included in the National Curriculum from the age of 5 and the Secretary of State's requirement that the National Curriculum for Science must include Aids education from the age of 11 (F.Y.C. 1992). the inference is that the body of knowledge forming such sex/Aids education is an appropriate content for 5 - 11 year olds.

Goldman and Goldman (1982) also showed that very young children do think sexually and have a good knowledge of sex facts or have developed very adequate theories to support their observations and experiences. Much of their information comes from family events, like pregnancy, bathing, sibling communication and the like.

It is not within the scope of this study to detail the considerable evidence of the wide content and interest of sex facts, that children have, but to show with illustrative examples the kind of scope in both content, and the age at which such information is known/requested.

Bibby and Bibby (1944), suggested the following content for 2 - 5 year olds: knowledge of sex differences, development of baby in womb, how babies are born, an understanding of male and female elements in animals as well as humans. For 5 - 8 year olds they suggested: knowledge of sperm and ovum, how human sexual intercourse occurs, and so on.

Bibby (1944), gives exhaustive details of the kinds of questions children ask and their sex talk. He gives examples of very young children exploring and asking about sex differences, ways of urinating, exploring where babies come from and how they get out, whether babies have bodily functions while in the womb, and so on.

Bibby (1944) gives extensive detail to questions from older children of between 10 - 13 years. They want to know about such topics as: 'cissy' men, sex outside marriage, difficulties during birth, masturbation (boys and girls), effect of smoking and drinking on pregnancy, details about twins, menstruation and seminal emission, does sex hurt, miscarriage and still birth, S.T.Ds., virginity, family planning, infertility, and so on.

Dawkins (1967), gives some insights into children's topics up to the age of 9. She includes sexual intercourse, development of baby inside mother, gestation, human birth, meaning of 'four letter words'. Masturbation, homosexuality, and pornography are areas which will need addressing in the upper junior/lower secondary phase, she suggests.

From her work among primary aged pupils, Kenner (1969), includes examples of a wide range of subjects children ask about including: size of breasts,

use of Tampax; the menopause, circumcision, wet dreams, erections, sexual intercourse, twins, miscarriage, infertility and so on. Hughes (1988), lists children's questions which cover these topics: birth, the father's role in sexual intercourse, gestation, different degrees of love, physical facts, rape, homosexuality, prostitution, abortion, Aids, contraception, sexual abuse, divorce, different family circumstances, and the like.

Manley (1964) reported that only 10% of teenagers had an adequate knowledge of V.D. Elias and Gebhard (1969) drew out differences of knowledge in relation to the social class factor; that while 96% of blue collar 13 year olds knew about intercourse, only 4% (blue collar) understood about fertilisation compared with 27% of white collar boys. In Sweden, only 11% children got their contraception information from school, with 65% boys and 36% girls obtaining it from their peers. Goldman and Goldman (1982) found that by the age of 9 most children knew the father's role in copulation, and 75% of 11 year olds understood the process of birth, some children gained this knowledge from the fact that they were allowed to witness the births of their brothers and sisters.

First year secondary pupils (aged 11 - 12) showed varying degrees of knowledge on a range of sex facts; for example, 91% boys and 97% girls knew sexual intercourse was necessary for starting a baby; 68% boys and 90% girls knew babies develop in the womb; 32% boys and 64% girls knew that the process of menstruation was for the relining of the womb; 35% boys and 26% girls knew that masturbation did no harm in most cases; from all the replies over the whole range of questions girls seemed to be better informed than boys on most topics at this age (Ripley et al 1971). The position

of girls' superior knowledge over boys' does not go unchallenged as, Elias and Gebhard (1969) found that by the age of 8 - 10, blue collar boys knew about intercourse, abortion, condoms, prostitution, earlier than any other groups of children, largely due to the their societal and peer group influences. Pre-pubescent girls, overhearing adult female sex talk learn less than pre-pubescent boys who overhear adult males (Elias and Gebhard 1969).

Young boys (up to 5½ years old) knew more about girls' sex organs than vice versa, with Western children scoring higher than oriental children (Kreitler and Kreitler 1966). While nearly 50% of U.K. children knew of the father's sexual involvement in procreation, boys scored significantly higher than girls in the perception of the mother's and father's role in coitus, but this was mostly in terms of the passive female recipient of a male initiated activity, and such sex stereotyping needed correcting through sex education in school (Goldman and Goldman 1982).

Farrell (1978) found that 23% of all children, aged 8 or younger, knew where babies came from, and a total of 82% knew, by the end of the primary school stage, and the mean age for knowing about sexual intercourse was just over 11 years.

As part of a longitudinal study of children's sexual knowledge, Fidge (1988), found, for example, that in addition to detailed knowledge of physical sex differences, reproductive details, understanding of pubertal change, contraceptive information, and so on, 11 year old children (at the beginning of their 4th year in the junior school), understood the meanings of the following words:

Abortion (96%), Rape (96%), Lesbian (96%), Gay (96%), Prostitute (92%), Pornography (88%), Virginity (81%), Paedophile (69%), Sterilisation (69%), Miscarriage (58%), Bi-sexual (46%).

Interestingly, in spite of the almost total (96%) understanding of the terms 'Lesbian and Gay' only 35% knew what the word 'Homosexuality' meant.

Primary-aged children (7 - 11) continue to show that they have a very wide knowledge of sexual matters, ranging from HIV/Aids (Went 1988; Farquhar 1990; Collyer 1995) homosexuality ((Green 1994) contraception (Went 1988; Green 1994) abortion (Green 1994; Collyer 1995) sexual abuse (Went 1988; Collyer 1995) infertility and test-tube babies (Went 1988) Condoms and sperm banks (Collyer 1995)... to give a few examples.

It has long been recognised that children are exposed to far greater and pervasive sexual stimuli and more sexual information than their parents were (Goodman 1967; Winn 1884; Gammage 1989) with the result that they know much more about sex than their parents did at the same age (Kirk 1967; Stiller 1967; S.B.C. 1971; Disney 1971; Wells-Pestell 1976; Farrell 1978; Fidge 1978, 1978a; Goldman and Goldman 1988; Collyer 1995).

Up to the end of the 1970s, Fidge (1978) was able to show an increasing and considerable volume of support from parents and children for sex education to be given in primary school, well before the age of puberty. That trend has continued (Goldman and Goldman 1982; Went 1985; Allen 1987; Massey 1988; Balding 1994; H.P.A.N.I. 1996). While Calderone (1966) said that the most important sex education was during a child's first 10 years, from impressions and attitudes of adults around him, it has been noted in earlier sections that many children are surrounded by inadequate or

ineffective adults, as far as sex education is concerned, or that the children are privy to negative sexual impressions and attitudes, which are unhelpful to their 'healthy' sexual development.

Whether children preferred teachers or parents telling them about sex, they still said that they should have received more sex education at school (Schofield 1973; Ray Went 1995); or more particularly, that they would have liked to have had sex education in the junior school (Fidge 1978a). Children said that they preferred to receive information from school (Disney 1971), and Farrell (1978) reported that the majority of teenagers in her study said that school lessons were the best way to learn, that sexual information should be treated normally, like any other aspect of education.

If children do not get sex education at school, they will not remain ignorant of sex matters (L.C.C. 1964). Those groups and individuals who exert pressure, against early or full sex education because they feel it will lead to 'wrong behaviour' seem unaware of the facts (Farrell 1978). From their study, Goldman and Goldman (1982) found that greater factual knowledge resulted from compulsory sex education in school, and that by this means, insights and concepts were taught earlier than otherwise.

A head's perception of parents as sex educators, an understanding of the source of a child's sex information, the quantitative and qualitative levels of a child's sex knowledge and the appropriateness of the timing of that knowledge, inform and influence decisions concerning sex education in the primary school.

CHAPTER 3: THE HEAD'S ROLE AND INFLUENCE ON DECISIONS REGARDING SEX EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM

3.1 INTRODUCTION

It is my contention that heads occupy a key position regarding curriculum change in their schools. In this chapter I propose examining this notion in greater detail, particularly how they can influence the implementation of sex education in the school curriculum.

There are two main themes to be considered:

1. The role of the head;
 - a) perceptions and expectations regarding that role,
 - b) the concept that the head's role has within it,
 - 'roles within the role',
 - c) the concept that the head occupies a position
 - of power and influence over curriculum decisions.

and

2. Factors that influence the head's decisions.

The heads are placed and sustained in their position,

1. by a legal, official and formal framework,
2. by the historical and informal development of the post,
3. by the complicated network of perceptions and expectations, both,
 - from heads themselves, and others, of the varied aspects of
 - their roles.

Each head operates from an individual power-base, differing in certain respects and degree from other heads, but sharing many common factors.

Decisions made will start from the power-base each head occupies, but these decisions will, themselves, be influenced by many factors arising from, and around, the head, both inside and outside the school.

Factors which influence the head's status, position, and decision-making process, will either be within, or outside his/her personal control. Thus any decision made rests upon three main forces:

1. the power-base from which it is made,
2. the factors that influence that decision, and,
3. the extent to which the head has control over that decision.

Every factor identified in the description that follows, has the potential to affect, directly or indirectly, any curriculum decision made by the head. It is likely that only some of the factors of influence identified will be recognised or perceived by heads as having a part in their decision-making process.

The relationship of some factors to curriculum innovation and development will be obvious, as in the case of staffing, for example. The existence of a musician on the staff will be of considerable significance for the head in developing music. In other cases the link between a factor of influence and its effect on the head's curriculum decision-making may appear obscure. For example, consider the influence arising from the head's 'protective role', and how the exercise of that role could affect decisions made. Such questions as: Will heads.....

1. promote curriculum proposals which might generate critical or controversial debate from people outside the school ?

2. protect staff against parental criticism, inspectorial interference, or the inappropriate interpretations of county policy ?
3. take a firm line with parents who do not want their children to participate in certain activities of the school curriculum ?
4. water-down certain curriculum decisions, which although a natural development of the established school philosophy, may not be understood by others ?

How heads perceive and exercise their role (and various roles within that role) will have consequences on curriculum decisions. This chapter aims to examine those factors.

3.2 LEGAL DETERMINANTS OF THE ROLE

In legal terms the head is an employee of either the LEA or the school governors and responsible to them for the conduct of the school. The governors and LEAs have formerly had control of the curriculum, but this has usually been exercised in 'consultation' with the head. This section will review this relationship. Whatever the legal situation before the introduction of the educational reforms from the mid 1980s onwards, the practical situation was that heads had complete control of the curriculum and its development (Menter et al 1995). Given the power they formerly exercised, the implementation of sex education could be said to have been in their hands.

Until 1992, all headteachers in maintained schools were employed by the LEAs (county and controlled schools) or the school governors in the case of aided denominational schools or special agreement schools. The position

in aided and special agreement schools remains the same, but since the 1992 Education Act, school governors of all county and controlled schools now directly appoint and dismiss staff (rather than the LEA), but the teachers are still employed by the LEA. In addition some schools with grant maintained or city technology status form another category where staff are employed by the school governors of schools not funded by the LEA, but by central government. This is a situation which has thrown up legal uncertainties in some situations (Lowe 1993).

The terms and conditions of their employment were set out in their contracts, and these referred to the Education Acts currently in force, the conditions of employment prescribed in the regulations under the Acts and made by the Secretary of State for Education, such regulations of the LEA as may apply and be in force and the Articles of Government (formerly Rules of Management for primary schools before the 1980 Education Act), any Trust Deed (which may apply in voluntary schools) for the school. (K.E.C. 1957; N.S. 1967; Bexley 1969; D.E.S. 1987b). More recently heads are subject to rules, regulations and policies laid down by the governors (or employers, if not the governors), provisions of any scheme of local management under section 104 of the Education Act 1996 (paras: 31.1 (e) and 31.2 (b) (i) and (ii) DfEE 1997a).

The administration of local systems of education is governed by the Articles of Government and Instruments of Government for each individual school. These determine the function of the LEA, the school governors, and headteacher. The Articles have as much force in law as the Education Acts (Stone and Taylor 1967).

Regulations which legally define the head's role are explicit that the management of all facets of school life is central to his/her position (Bexley 1970; D.E.S. 1987b; Spear 1987; Menter et al. 1995; DfEE 1997a).

- " The head's responsibility for the general nature of educational provision... organisation... and policy making... are all legally central to the head's role."

(Bacon 1978).

(See also Baron and Howell 1974; Coulson 1976; Hellowell 1991)

This has long been evident from the contractual obligations of all heads:

- " Subject to the Rules of Management (now Articles of Government RF) of the school concerned the Head Teacher shall have under his control the internal organisation, management.. of the school."

(K.E.C. 1957).

- " In accordance with the Articles of Government of the school concerned, the Headteacher shall... have under his control the internal organisation, management... of the school."

(Bexley 1981a).

- " ... the Head Teacher is responsible for the internal organisation and management of the school..."

(D.E.S. 1987b).

- " ... a head teacher shall be responsible for the internal organisation, management and control of the school."

(D.f.E.E. 1997a)

Control of the internal organisation and management of the school gives the head considerable immediate and long-term power to influence the development of major areas of the school.

3.3 SCHOOL GOVERNORS

Governors have always had considerable powers, which, in the past they neither fully realised nor exercised (C.A.C.E. 1967; Menter et al 1995).

Before the current reforms, in county and controlled schools, major control remained with the LEA, with the governors of aided and special agreement schools being more independent, but still largely influenced by the LEA.

Under the terms of the Articles of Government, the control of the curriculum had always been fundamentally in the hands of the governors. With one or two minor, local, variations, the Articles defined the the relationships between governors, LEAs and staff.

- " 1. The local education authority shall determine the general educational character of the school and its place in the local educational system. Subject thereto the governors shall have the general direction of the conduct and curriculum of the school.
- 3. (a) There shall be full consultation at all times between the headmaster and the chairman of the governors.
(b) All proposals and reports affecting the conduct and curriculum of the school shall be submitted formally to the governors."

(N.U.T. 1972).

Changes in the Education (No.2) Act 1986 left the position broadly similar:

- " 2(1) (a) The conduct of the school shall be under the direction of the Governing Body, but subject to any provision contained in these Articles conferring specific functions on any person other than the Governing Body, and to the provision made by or under the 1986 Act or any other enactment.

2(1) (c) The Governors shall consult the Head Teacher in such a manner as to give him full opportunity for the expression of his views on matters affecting the school, and shall give full consideration to any views on such matters expressed to them by the Head Teacher.

3(1) The content of the secular curriculum for the School shall be under the control of the Governing Body.

3(3) The Governing Body shall allocate to the Head Teacher such functions as will, subject to the resources available, enable him to determine and organise the curriculum, and secure that it is followed within the School.

(K.C.C. 1989).

In addition, the governors' potential for influencing the decision-making strategies of the head were enhanced by the fact that they were also responsible for the appointment of staff, the requisitioning of equipment, and financial control. The Articles set down the basic requirement of consultation between the head and the governors, with due regard being

given to the head's views.

There has long been a requirement to establish full consultation at all times between head and governors (N.U.T. 1972; OFSTED 1994), developing the head's role further than the advice in the Plowden Report (C.A.C.E. 1967), that the head should be fully conversant with the managers' (now governors') views of running the school.

Moves in the late 1970s to introduce parental, teacher and local community representation on governing bodies (Taylor 1977), were introduced voluntarily by some LEAs, but became a legal requirement under the Education Act 1980. By enlarging the governing boards, it was thought that this would widen the influences on the head's decision-making, though under the 1980 Act, he himself could opt to be a governor of the school.

Before the changes of 1980, Stone and Taylor (1976) reported that while the legal position of the LEA and managers (now governors) was accepted, there had been a gradual increase in the head's direct influence on the curriculum, resulting in the situation where the head and staff decided on what was taught in school (see also: H.A.A.S.E. 1974). It is possible that both heads and governors saw the position of the governors' control of the curriculum as being more formal than real (Harding and Kelly 1977; Stone and Taylor 1978; Menter et al 1995), and that the particular influence and control formalised in the Articles of Government was thought by the National Association of Governors and Managers to be more properly exercised and expressed through the relationship with the head, in terms of accountability (Stone and Taylor 1976).

Before the Education Act 1980, the D.E.S. recognised that the governors' responsibility for the curriculum, had virtually no practical power since both heads and governors perceived that such matters were properly left to the head and staff (D.E.S. 1977e; Taylor Report 1977). Developments through to the mid 1980s, including parental representation on governing bodies, left the position of the head, much as it had always been (Alexander 1984). Up to this time therefore the introduction of sex education in the school would have been entirely dependent upon the attitude of the head.

School governors can exercise influence as they are responsible for appointing the head, and they will appoint a person in whom they have confidence and with whose educational philosophy they agree. Aided school governors have always had a greater control of the head's appointment, as they are the employers, but until recently, the LEA's influence in non-aided schools tended to be paramount, though this is gradually changing (K.E.C. 1967; Bexley 1969; D.E.S. 1987c; Education Act 1992).

While the legal position of the governors seems formidable, their intervention in the curriculum has not been substantial. Opposition from governors regarding the curriculum decisions of the head has always been rare (Hayes 1995), though Hansen and Jensen (1971), writing from a position, considered by some to be critical of the management of education at the time, saw the school governors acting as a constraint on the head's otherwise, powerful position. Some heads reported problems with school governors who had no idea about current educational thinking, lacked interest in curriculum matters, left a lot of the policy document

preparation for curriculum discussion to the heads (Menter et al. 1995; Dunning 1996). Other potential difficulties have been reported over conflict with governors who did not share the head's enthusiasm or views (Hayes 1995).

Following the 1986 Act, LEAs were obliged to publish curriculum statements and the governors of county and controlled school, in consultation with the head had a duty to implement the secular curriculum for their school in response to the LEA's published policy. In aided and special agreement schools the content of the secular curriculum was under the control of the governors who were asked to 'have regard to the policy of the Authority' (Education (No.2) Act 1986). The 1986 Act made governors responsible for determining what if any sex education should be taught in their schools (DES 1987). Where sex education already existed it generally meant a statement reflecting what already happened. Where it did not exist many governors were very slow in acting upon the new requirements. Years later many schools still had no published policies. In spite of these changes, heads were left with considerable power and influence.

Whether heads saw governors as effective collaborators or irksome meddlers, legally the governors had greater increased responsibility. Heads were legally more accountable to their governors but there was no doubt who carried the bulk of the day-to-day responsibilities. 'It is indeed the heads who are carrying the can' (Menter et al. 1995).

Since the 1988 Act (which introduced the National Curriculum) heads have felt the pressure of coping with increased governors' powers (Menter et al.

1995; Webb and Vulliamy 1996) and the Act has brought about a shift in the functioning of schools towards a business culture with '...governors as Board of Directors and headteacher as Chief Executive' (Ball 1990).

The Education Act 1993 made little difference to the position of the heads' and Governors' roles as far as primary school sex education was concerned. The head remained in an influential position of contributing to the preparation, review and updating of the governors' policy on sex education (DfE 1994). To date, in spite of the changes from the pre-1980 position heads have considerable power and influence (Southworth 1995; Menter et al 1995; Webb and Vulliamy 1996).

Future proposals in a White Paper, to compel heads to be school governors to bolster the partnership between heads and governors and enable a better flow of information for more effective decision-making (DfEE 1997b) have been severely criticised over the potential loss of independence by heads, and the possible conflict such a relationship could engender (Hanbury 1997). The White Paper (1997) raises questions about the nature of a head's role and Petch (1997) sees a possible conflict of interest over combining the role of governor with head would mean confusion from being a member of a group to which you are accountable.

3.4 SOCIETAL DETERMINANTS OF THE HEAD'S ROLE

A role is determined, not only by the expectations held regarding the role by others irrespective of the occupant, or by the actor's own expectations and perceptions of his role, but also by the influence of other outside factors. The emphases and pressures generated by such outside factors

influence behaviour patterns of the role and the style and outcome of the decision-making processes of the actor (Webb and Vulliamy 1996).

Lawton (1979) has shown that the teacher's role, and by implication, the headteacher's role, is determined by society in general and in particular, by the influences upon him of the school in which he works. Societal influences affect the head's position, shaping his role and these same influences channel through the head, and in turn influence the roles of the staff of the school (Morrison and McIntyre 1969; Webb and Vulliamy 1996; Dunning 1996).

Westwood (1966) maintained that a head occupied a role as one of "...society's most important members", implying a head had influence in shaping future society. Edmonds (1968) saw a head as being engaged in "...the most personal of all public services.", thus extending the image of having personal influence on a developing generation. It is questionable that heads had such personal influence then and even less so now when a traditional role is under such critical examination (Boydell 1990).

The understanding of a head's role in the 1990s, will be in terms of managing a service subjected to swift and fundamental change, a role still shaped by societal factors, a society of market forces and high technology. The head's role is increasingly moving into management and administration and away from teaching (Johnston and Pickersgill 1992; Webb and Vulliamy 1996) far removed from the halcyon days of the Plowden Report (1967).

Currently it is unlikely a head is regarded as such a powerful personal

influence, although the effects of the curriculum upon the children who experience it, will eventually reflect in the society they go on to create. The extent to which a head influences the curriculum provides some measure of the extent he is able to influence pupils passing through his school.

The head's role as the spokesman for his school was regarded as being of considerable importance (Steinman 1971). Among the responsibilities attributed to that role were those of "Representing the interests of his school to hierarchically superior officers" (Steinman 1971). Staff value the head's role in explaining their work to parents and governors (Webb and Vulliamy 1996), in some respects he is seen as 'selling' the school as an educational commodity (Menter et al 1995). The role of spokesman-representative places him in a powerful position of control over the flow of information both to and from the school. Briault (1976) described the head, not only as the spokesman, but also as the figurehead, recognised as responsible for carrying the ultimate responsibility for the institution (Muse and Wallace 1988; Webb and Vulliamy 1996a).

Bacon (1978) found that most schools possessed an essentially hierarchical line of management which was seen by pupils and parents (and possibly staff and others) as forming a pyramid, the head at the apex, making decisions which were passed down for others to execute (Hansen and Jensen 1971) though this was now liable to change (Hellowell 1991; Johnston and Pickersgill 1992). Yet even where joint mechanisms existed for decision-making, primary heads considered themselves to be the principal decision-makers (Baginsky 1991; Levarcic 1992; Hayes 1995). It is the head who is in a superior position to hinder any innovation should he wish and it is he

in the long run who must support and ratify any decisions (Mason 1987; Massey 1988).

" In any school the head has ultimate responsibility. However many ideas people have, however much they want to initiate, it is the head whose interest and support puts the seal of success upon that innovation."

(Mason 1987).

The head would be concerned through the exercise of his role to identify the role of his school in the educational system of which it was a part (Briault 1976; Coppice 1997; DfEE 1997). Therefore the head's role in organising and developing the curriculum of his school (C.A.C.E. 1967) would need to take into account the right balance between the internal aims of the school and its contribution to the system as a whole. An integral part of a primary head's role was the function to develop links with his secondary colleagues (Plowden 1967; Bromley 1997; DfEE 1997). This 'right balance' is significant in the development of links between primary and secondary education, though probably easier to achieve now with the National Curriculum. Sex Education is an area where consultation with the secondary sector enables continuity (Fidge 1992). Such links with secondary education will influence some curriculum decisions.

The forces and tensions which impinge on the school from the community influence the head. There is a need for a head to establish relations with the community, as part of his role (Steinman 1971; High Firs 1997). Becher et al. (1981) described the head as the controller of the school's transactions with the outside world. Listing the responsibilities of a primary head, Esp (1987) included:

" Presenting the school to the local community and taking into account its expectations."

(Esp 1987).

Morris (1978) saw the role of the head including a sensitivity to the needs of the community (see also: Menter et al 1995) so that rather than imposing solutions on the community, he sought to determine the local needs and demonstrated a willingness to meet them in ways that were appropriate. This could be particularly important for sex education. Representatives from the community have been given increasingly important roles in contributing to the ways schools are managed, particularly through the boards of governors. This partnership with the local community is seen to benefit the educational process and heads are finding that they are having to respond more consciously to community expectations (Whitaker 1983) with its obvious influence on the curriculum. The developing head's role was seen to require the skills of both the public relations officer and the diplomat (D.E.S. 1977b). The school cannot be separated from society, and the reciprocal effect the one has on the other was seen as a constant factor in moulding educational policies and the kind of society that developed (Hansen and Jensen 1971; Dunning 1996; Webb and Vulliamy 1996).

The wider considerations of what the school stood for affected the development of long-term objectives to serve the needs of the children and informed the process by which a head fulfilled his role of leading staff to implement such objectives (Briault 1976; Southworth 1988). Lawton (1979) urged heads to take social, moral and cultural factors into account in their role of managing curriculum development (Concern 1994). Stone and Taylor (1976) advised heads of the need to see that pupils were prepared for their roles in society (DfE 1994). All have important implications for developing sex education. Community influence will continue to be at work, affecting the decisions heads make and the ways schools are run

Particularly as current policies of forging links with the community are part of the legal framework of a head's professional duties (D.E.S. 1987b; Muse and Wallace 1988; DfE 1994; Hayes 1995).

3.5 EXPECTATIONS OF THE ROLE

The role of the head is generally seen in terms of the position or status he occupies in discharging his professional responsibilities.

Irrespective of the occupant of the role it is recognised that there is a general pattern of behaviour associated with the position.

" ... attached to any position is a set of expectations about what behaviour is appropriate to the person who is occupying the position."

(Hargreaves 1975).

Musgrove and Taylor (1965) had earlier made the same observation. Both the occupant of the role and those who respond to it have expectations of what is appropriate for that role (Southworth 1993). The expectations heads have of their role and their perception of the expectations of others will affect the way they fulfil the role, the decisions they make and the way they develop their schools (Boydell 1990; Jones and Hayes 1991; Menter et al 1995; TES 1997b).

" A role, then, is a set of actions a person of a particular type or category is expected to perform... and knowledge of the role consists of knowing the rules which enjoin these kind of actions in the proper order and in appropriate circumstances."

(Harre and Secord 1972).

The actions of a head will be directed ultimately to secure the proper education of the pupils (Dixon 1997). But these actions take place in a web of influence, of which the head's perception of his role is part, and are subject to many other factors both in and beyond his control (Jones and Hayes 1991; Johnston and Pickersgill 1992). Many of these factors present

opposing influences on decisions to be made so it follows that what is decided is affected by the strongest influence.

The concept of the role of the head is ambiguous, since while reference is made to the role in the literature (e.g. Cook and Mack 1971; Peters 1976; Johnston and Pickersgill 1992) the head fulfils a number of roles within his position (Dunning 1996) as in the case of his role as, leader, decision-maker, manager, facilitator, communicator, and so on.

Briault (1976) suggested that he must

"... seek effectively to fulfil a number of roles."

The fact that a head's role is vaguely defined (Morrison and McIntyre 1969; Hellowell 1991) means that there is considerable latitude and interpretation as to what a head must do.

The position occupied by the head is one which all heads have observed and experienced from a variety of standpoints; as pupils themselves at school; as assistant teachers; in some cases as parents with their own children in other schools and eventually as heads themselves. Previous experience may exercise both positive and negative influences on the new occupant of the role (TES 1997b). Positive influences come from following good examples, practices and advice, and negative influences from determining faults, shortcomings and bad practice in others and deciding against behaving like that oneself (Nelson 1997). In addition to the understanding a new head forms of his roles from personal experience, there will be information he has gathered from other sources, but his personal beliefs about his role and the pursuit of his 'personal vision' will prove a powerful motivation

(Southworth 1993). Sex education development will be strongly influenced by the head's personal beliefs.

After promotion most heads still regarded themselves primarily as teachers (Coulson 1976 and 1986; Hellowell 1991; Webb and Vulliamy 1996). This is not surprising since almost all heads were initially short-listed and recommended on the basis that they were considered excellent teachers (Hellowell 1991). Being an excellent teacher does not necessarily stand a candidate in good stead for being a head, particularly nowadays. It was observed that promotion took a head away from the occupational role for which he had been trained and socialised and placed him in a position of organisational leadership for which he was relatively unprepared (Coulson 1976; Webb and Vulliamy 1996).

Baron (1956), C.A.C.E. (1967), Morrison and McIntyre (1969), had been among some of the earlier voices raised over the lack of preparation and training for the new roles, and claimed it was a serious fault in the system of school management that must be rectified (Muse and Wallace 1988; Johnston and Pickersgill 1992; Southworth 1993). Edmonds (1968) stated that most aspects of a head's role could be trained for, especially using situational techniques. Morrison and McIntyre (1969) agreed the need for training and specified the wide ranging administrative task which demanded attention. Croydon (1961) had already set out the range of tasks most LEAs would expect from heads. Without preparation a head has to learn his job in situ (Allen 1967). Donaldson (1970) reported that 75% of his sample of primary heads who had not received preparation for their posts, declared there was a need for adequate training. Coulson (1976) found that due to

little preparation for a headship and role change, the new head :

" ... tends to follow the traditional model of headship that he has experienced as an assistant and to take other heads as his reference group."

(Coulson 1976).

Even in the late 1980s heads were still being appointed without specific training, though there is now recognition that the changing demands of headship, the new roles and responsibilities of school governors, different types of school status, and other changes of control and administration in the current movement of educational reform makes training for headship essential (Southworth 1993; Bromley 1997; TTA 1998). Without training a head must rely on his previous experience of what is appropriate in the primary school (Boydell 1990). A poor understanding of his role or confusion regarding the appropriate behaviours the various roles demand, are factors likely to affect his management of the school, and ultimately his development of the curriculum, hence the recognition of training as an essential requirement for effective headship (K.C.C. 1992; T.T.A. 1998).

There has always been an understanding that it is an integral part of the head's role in respect of the curriculum, that he should be responsible for setting goals, aims, objectives, and oversee the practicalities of curriculum development (Southworth 1993). Coulson (1976) found that heads and teachers had expectations that the head would set goals and personally supervise the work of the school. His personal attitudes, beliefs, prejudices and philosophy are likely to affect his aims for the curriculum, unless he has established a wider basis for formulating policy (Southworth 1988; Jones and Hayes 1991; Webb and Vulliamy 1996). In schools where, under the head's leadership, aims and objectives are set taking account of

local circumstances, teaching capacity, materials and apparatus, the character of the children, and the school environment (N.U.T. 1972) it is likely that the head's personal bias is less intrusive, which could be an important consideration for sex education.

An analysis of the resources available and the support of all concerned (Johnson and Pickersgill 1992) was essential in setting and sustaining new aims, and equally important to the head's 'peculiar and particular role' (Briault 1976) was that he:

" ...seek to evaluate... the relative success of the institution... in achieving its objectives."
(Briault 1976).

The quality of a head's leadership has been strongly linked to the quality of children's education (Mortimore et al 1986; Muse and Wallace 1988). The need for heads to be able to satisfy recent Government expectations for quality assurance in schools will be part of the evaluation process (Johnston and Pickersgill 1992). The process of evaluating curriculum development involves the need to monitor the delivery of the curriculum (OFSTED 1994; Richards 1995; Webb and Vulliamy 1996) which has introduced another aspect of a head's role in curriculum leadership. Some aspects of this role may need to be delegated to other senior staff (Wallace 1992).

The head's responsibility for developing strategies to enable all staff to participate in developing aims and identifying with them, was seen as an important aspect of his role (Hellowell 1991).

" ...the personal identification of each member (of staff RF) with the aims and objectives of the school, and their related tasks can bring about high morale which is an indicator of a dynamic and flourishing organisation."
(Blake and Mouton 1971).

The head's role in determining aims, and the means of achieving them, in consultation with the staff (C.A.C.B. 1967; Mack 1976; Johnston and Pickersgill 1992), leading to the development of a 'constructive consensus' was regarded as a significant part of his responsibility (Briault 1976). Stone and Taylor (1976) maintained that the head must shape the pedagogical and allied operations of the school, deciding on the curriculum (Coulson 1976) with a directing role in continuing curriculum development (Morrison and McIntyre 1969; Morris 1978; High Firs 1997).

The requirement of the Education Act 1980, for a school prospectus, made it necessary to publish statements about the school curriculum. Furthermore a useful feature was the development by the head of a staff handbook...

" ...containing a complete set of statements about the school's curriculum aims and objectives can provide a source of reference for all teachers..."

(Whitaker 1983).

While it was a fundamental requisite for a head to make his aims clear, it was found that many 'successful' heads were unable to state their aims 'clearly and convincingly' (C.A.C.E. 1967). Dearden (1976) suggested that it was one thing to have aims, as distinct from the ability to state them. Since one of the foremost tasks of the head's role is:

" ...to clarify, at least to themselves, and if possible their staffs, the objectives at which they are aiming."

(Briault 1976).

it seems probable that where they are unable to make their aims and objectives clear (for whatever reasons), curriculum development will be hindered. A situation fast being rectified (OFSTED 1994).

The influence of central Government was relatively indirect upon the head's

role in curriculum development until the mid 1980s when the current round of educational reform got underway. Before that such influence had been through the ways the DES had provided funding for the system through the central Exchequer, the LEAs; by issuing Rules, Regulations, Statutory Orders, Circulars, administrative Memoranda and the ways in which the Department had interpreted education law (Edmonds 1968).

The DES promoted educational research, which was disseminated through official reports, which were important in shaping the head's role in curriculum matters. The Department promoted debates on areas of educational concern, and undertook consultation and enquiry for further development. By organising courses, conferences, seminars; through information gathering and informing public opinion; through publications (many of which were the work of HMI), the Department was able to influence the decisions made by heads concerning the curricula in their schools.

The establishment of the National Curriculum; determination of funding for specified areas and subjects by the DES (DfE) through setting the percentage of G.E.S.T. funds to be spent in particular ways; the weakening of the powers of LEAs, and so on, are moves which all tended to reduce the power of the head in curriculum matters, compared to the heady days of the mid 1960s - 70s (Jones and Hayes 1991; Dunning 1996; Webb and Vulliamy 1996).

But there are areas of the curriculum, not directly prescribed by the National Curriculum where the heads continue to have influence (Southworth 1993 and 1995; Menter et al 1995; Webb and Vulliamy 1996a).

3.6 THE HEAD'S PERCEPTION OF HIS ROLE

Musgrove and Taylor (1965) said that a head acquired and performed his role by the linking of position roles in a role-set. His colleagues form his complementary role partners in this set. The role-set also comprises other partners like parents, pupils, administrators and governors (Merton 1957). Musgrove and Taylor (1965) held that it is in this role-set that the head works in a framework of expectations. Hargreaves (1975) found that heads had expectations of how their role partners should behave, who in turn had their own expectations of what properly constituted the role occupied by the head. The interplay of these expectations can affect the development and exercise of each respective role.

A head has considerable freedom to shape and develop his own role and determine the roles of others in his role-set, particularly his staff (Lortie 1969; Thomason 1970; Coulson 1976; Hellowell 1991). A head is in a strong position to control the professional behaviour of his staff (DfEE 1997) and exercise considerable personal influence on all major areas of school organisation. Heads see themselves occupying a variety of roles.

The head's power and freedom to mould the school to his philosophy was a central concept of the traditional British Head Teacher and many see this as their major role (Baron 1956; Stones 1963; Musgrave 1972; Southworth 1988; Webb and Vulliamy 1996a). Reller (1968) reported that a head could engage in the redevelopment and reshaping of his school if he wished, suggesting that such decisions lay in the personal decision-making domain of the head.

The majority (75%) of heads in Coulson's (1976) study saw the need to make their attitudes clear as an integral part of their role. Coulson (1976) reported that both heads and staffs had expectations that the head would set goals and personally supervise and control the work of the staff. Whether the goal-setting was done by the head alone or in consultation with the staff could alter both the basis and outcome of the decisions though the head would remain in overall control (Southworth 1988).

Every head has his own philosophy of education, expressed or not (Southworth 1988), but clearly implied and demonstrated in his decision-making (Webb and Vulliamy 1996). Whether he acted as the facilitator in forming a philosophy for his school (Allen 1967) or implemented his own philosophy (Edmonds 1968) the development of the curriculum was subject to the degree of personal influence the head decided to bring to bear (Southworth 1993). Findlay (1974) reported that the curriculum style of any school reflected the head's outlook and depending on the head's views he could advance or inhibit innovative change - a factor of some importance for sex education. Advice to those embarking on their first headship, that their creative and constructive abilities would find full scope in developing the curriculum, suggested that the head's control of the curriculum was perceived to be virtually a fundamental right to his role (Edmonds 1968; TES 1997b). Taylor et al. (1974b) and Stone and Taylor (1976), both published findings which supported the notion that the head's control and influence on the curriculum was seen as paramount, and a position in which he had considerable control (Hayes 1995).

Many adults refer to their own experiences as children at school and the

curriculum they followed in formulating concepts of what was, and maybe, still is, appropriate. Appeals to, '...so and so was good enough for us' or '...we managed without learning about so and so' are heard in questioning some innovative moves in present curricula. These early notions of what is appropriate for the school curriculum can colour teachers' views. Some influence on the head's role for the oversight, development and delivery of the curriculum might flow from similar personal opinions.

An important factor in the selection of heads was that they had proved themselves to be very good teachers and while the selection procedures for heads now is often wider-ranging with other sociometric and psychological tests applied, together with an exploration of views and skills covering various facets of the job, the ability to be a very good teacher is still basic to the role (Hellawell 1991; Alexander et al 1992). The need to extend the role' to encompass financial and other management and personnel issues, in the light of current educational policy does not eradicate the expectation that the head will be an excellent teacher (Hargreaves 1994).

The teaching duties of a head would aid his understanding both of pupils and staff (Briault 1976; Southworth 1993). The head's teaching duties were seen as a useful vehicle to stimulate children, inspire staff, weld school unity and set school values (C.A.C.E. 1967; Hellawell 1991).

Plowden (1967) saw it as a duty of the head to stand in for the staff to cover for any weaknesses in the curriculum or where they were unable or unwilling to teach. The tradition of the head being an excellent teacher who would continue to have some regular teaching commitment, goes back a long way (Board of Education 1905; Board of Education 1937; Caspari 1965;

Westwood 1966; C.A.C.E. 1967; Morrison and McIntyre 1969; Bexley 1970; Coulson 1976a; Whitaker 1983; D.E.S. 1987b; Southworth 1993; Coppice 1997) but is an aspect of headship which is being rapidly eroded (Webb 1994; Dunning 1996). The concept of the 'teacher par excellence' as an element in promotion has long been questioned in the wake of an ever widening role model for headship (Edmonds 1967, 1968; Boydell 1990) but with increased administrative and managerial aspects of the job many heads will experience the conflict of the requirement to remain an active teacher (Jones and Hayes 1991; Hellowell 1991; Dunning 1996). The head's teaching role as part of the overall teaching team (DfEE 1997); as a demonstrator of excellent teaching practice or as a resource to supplement, support or maintain areas of the curriculum through default, inability or unwillingness, would be a powerful influence on the curriculum and its development.

3.7 INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL FACTORS

There is little in the literature regarding the possible influence of personal factors upon the role of the head in curriculum development. I would like to tentatively propose that certain personal factors could have an effect on the head's management and development of the curriculum, particularly concerning such issues as sex education.

The age of the head might have some bearing on his attitudes and it could be that the older he is the less innovative he will be. A head taking over a school where the previous head has retired will often claim that the school had been 'freewheeling' for a couple of years and that some catching up is essential. Younger heads may be more socially aware and to some extent 'nearer' the needs of their pupils.

The sex of the head could also affect curriculum planning and outcomes. Most heads are male, even in primary schools, and their outlook and attitudes into which they have been socialised could be significant. In our society, male and female roles are different, in spite of the attempts to break down the rigid concepts of sex role stereotypes. Gender roles do not change overnight and the effect of one's gender and social behaviour and attitudes stemming from it may affect what heads regard as appropriate for the primary school curriculum. There is, for example some evidence that where a head and the deputy are of opposite sex, they may develop roles which would tend more towards 'family' concepts within the school (Coulson 1976).

" When a head and a deputy of a school are of different sex there may be a tendency for them to adopt paternal and maternal roles towards the members of the school... teachers as well as... pupils."

(Coulson 1976).

Colombotos (1963) and Kelsall and Kelsall (1969) found that most women teachers tended to have values such as kindness, nurturance and others which were 'people-oriented' and strongly supported those values found in feminine roles in society, unlike their male colleagues.

The head's marital status may also affect attitudes and it is possible that married heads, with or without children, and single heads, with or without children, will all have varying attitudes to certain curriculum areas.

There is no literature on the effects of a head's sexual orientation on certain areas of the curriculum as far as I am aware. References are found to the married status of heads, and by inference, the suggestion of attitudes from 'normal' heterosexual people, but nothing about heads who

are homosexual, or have other sexual lifestyles. This would almost certainly be on account of the fact that non-heterosexual heads would not wish to be identified (N.C.C.L. 1975; Hulme 1998). Data are gradually being accumulated regarding the attitudes of gay people towards the content of education and the development of areas of the curriculum pertinent to conveying neutral attitudes regarding differing lifestyles (Warren 1984; C.L.T.A. 1987). Such factors could affect both the content of established areas of the curriculum and whether or not other issues should be included on the curriculum at all.

Similar to sexual orientation, in that it would be difficult to obtain information easily, though it would be a little less sensitive, is political orientation. The views heads take over certain issues according to their political outlook will affect attitudes towards certain areas of the curriculum.

The religious beliefs of the head will also have some effect on what he considers appropriate. Particular denominations, whether Christian or not, have particular positions regarding major areas of behaviour and moral standards. In schools which are of voluntary status, and therefore organised according to a trust deed of a particular denomination or faith, the teaching at the school will be in accordance with that trust deed, and it would be expected that the head would have been appointed because he was a practising member of that denomination, or at the very least, sympathetic with its aims and tenets. Factors arising from the requirements of the trust deed, and from the beliefs of the head, will affect what is offered in the curriculum of the school (H.P.A.N.I. 1996).

Where schools are not associated with a religious denomination or faith, the religious beliefs of the head will affect his views on many world issues and the degree of importance he places upon such matters, together with his perception of whether or not they are appropriate to the primary curriculum will be influenced by this factor. Even where heads would not subscribe to having any particular religious belief, they will have a set of values, standards and attitudes, which inform their decisions on moral, behavioural and social issues, and which will affect decisions they make.

Reference is often made to the role of the head as manifesting or embodying a very strong personal relationship between himself as the occupant of that role and the school of which he is head. This relationship is clear in references to 'his school', 'my school', 'their schools' etc. (Ministry of Education 1959; C.A.C.E. 1967; Renshaw 1974; D.E.S. 1978a; Becher, Eraut and Knight 1981; D.E.S. 1982a; Alexander 1984; D.E.S. 1987b; Southworth 1988 and 1993; Webb and Vulliamy 1996a). So strong is the identification of the school with the person of the head that he is seen as occupying the role as central mediator, spokesman, representative, of 'his' school.

" This personalisation of the senior management function is extensive and of considerable significance. For heads thereby become the 'keepers' not merely of a school's organisational arrangements, but of its entire value-system. The school becomes an extension of their personality and beliefs."

(Alexander 1984).

It was found that many heads managed change in their schools by their own personal influence (Brown M. 1971; Southworth 1993). The head was seen as personally involved in every aspect of school life (Donaldson 1970) and this close relationship had the effect of centralising the decision-making process around the head himself (Coulson 1976; Webb and Vulliamy 1996a).

Campbell (1985) reported that heads were in a position of supporting change by providing a substantial framework for the pervasive context of values, attitudes and relationships, in which initiatives could be pursued.

The head was the one person who was always identified with the school (Coulson 1976) and Briault (1976) described him as the figurehead of his school. Many decisions heads make are in terms of 'I will not have...' 'I think it is best if....' and this personal identification factor will be very influential. A head's values, beliefs, attitudes and personal circumstances are likely to have a strong bearing on the decisions made (Alexander et al 1992; Southworth 1993) and may well influence matters such as sex education.

3.8 STAFFING

Before schemes for local management (LMS) the LEA determined the number of staff to be employed in each school and the number of posts above the basic scale and staff allocation was subject to many local variations. With LMSs schools have as many teachers as they can afford which is a financial two-edged sword (Jones and Hayes 1991; Dunning 1996). The allocation of allowances above the standard national scale and the local pay policy for each school is at the discretion of the governors.

The number of teachers a school can afford and the skills they have directly affects the curriculum and the nature and quality of its development and delivery. Given that the head has the overall control and supervision of the staff (K.E.C. 1967; D.E.S. 1987c; DfEE 1997) his control of the curriculum is two-fold. Firstly, on taking up an appointment at a

school he must work with and through the staff available to him, but secondly he will be able to manage, influence or manipulate the staff in the ways he wishes, and/or influence the appointment of staff to further his curriculum aims (Southworth 1993).

Until the mid 1980s heads of county and controlled schools had power regarding the appointment of staff. Heads of aided and special agreement schools were more likely to have the school governors' involvement in staff appointments but in spite of that they had considerable influence (Bexley 1949; Coulson 1976; D.E.S. 1987c). The determination of promoted posts has always been closely influenced by the head who would have set out the need and criteria for the posts in the first place and made his recommendations for the post-holders clear. The head's role in relation to staffing, both in controlling and supervising and the appointment process initially, is an important factor in his influence on the curriculum (Southworth 1993; Dunning 1996).

Until LMS the provision of In Service Training was dependent on the LEA. They set up teachers' centres and financed courses and activities which developed in a variety of ways, many being teacher-led and responsive to local need and initiative. The head's responsibility for staff development (Pollard et al 1994) and his concern for the curriculum, together with his oversight and approval for attendance at courses etc., provided a further means of influence over the curriculum (Webb and Vulliamy 1996). The influence upon the head's role for staff development was twofold. Firstly, because he only had at his disposal what was available locally or provided by outside bodies, the provision, or lack of

certain courses, either promoted or hindered his management of curriculum innovation. Difficulties were experienced when support was not available, for whatever reasons, for the development of certain areas of the curriculum which particular heads needed (Dunning 1996). There were few sex education courses compared to, say maths or reading. Secondly, what was provided could act as an influence and encourage heads to become involved in activities simply because they were there. In the case of county initiatives promoted by the local inspectorate, heads could find it difficult not to join in given the expectations associated with such courses. It was often politic to be involved in courses which had official approval and were valued by the establishment, which gave rise to a 'band-wagon' effect.

There was much local initiative which was dependent upon the active participation of heads and staff, teachers' centre wardens, and local advisers who formed groups and committees to develop courses to meet local needs. The contribution of a head in these initiatives was a way in which he could indirectly influence the curriculum (Southworth 1993) and this reflected his perception of his role as a curriculum developer (Richards 1995). Since the mid 1980s the funding structures for staff and curriculum development have changed considerably. The devolution of funds to the schools to buy in services or develop their own in-school training has given the head greater influence than before to pursue his role to develop the curriculum (Muse and Wallace 1988; Webb and Vulliamy 1996).

The gradual change from the 'LEA provider' to the 'consumer led' model, passed through various stages of devolution of funds, which gave rise to

different methods of provision, like local schools' shared-funding through consortia; the directing of funding for specific developmental targets; to the present situation of increased independence for heads, to buy in what they can afford. The 'imposition of funding percentages by central government did not necessarily have the desired objective because in some cases (for example the grants for AIDS education) by the time they were devolved to schools, produced such a minute sum that it was impossible to do anything with it. In many cases it was not even enough to release a teacher for a half-day course (given that a course was available). LMS and other non-curriculum matters have increased the head's workload and detracted from his role in curriculum development has been reported in some quarters (Webb 1994; Burgess et al 1994).

3.9 INSPECTORS - ADVISERS

One major influence upon the head's role in curriculum development came from the local inspectorate who stressed the need for strong curriculum leadership from heads (Webb and Vulliamy 1996). Local inspectors had more direct influence in school than HMI (Morrison and McIntyre 1969). They influenced the appointment of many heads in the first place and were often involved in staff appointments. The local inspectors' direct influence upon the head's role as curriculum manager came from their position of authority within the LEA, and the frequency of contact they developed with schools in their area. Their position to 'advise' meant that many heads found it difficult to oppose the local inspector's ideas.

Bacon (1978) saw the local advisory staff as a possible source of conflict with which heads had to cope, as they were likely to make demands upon the

head and school differing from demands from other quarters. Underlying the outward appearance of friendliness between heads and inspectors there was a fairly common degree of suspicion. Advice given and apparently well received, could be quickly and quietly forgotten, in the school where the head had the balance of power.

Part of the problem concerning the degree of influence an inspector had upon a head rested on the fact that most inspectors had a particular subject or speciality. Inspectors tended therefore to promote that particular interest, and advice from them outside their main field may not have been particularly helpful or informed. Furthermore, not all areas of concern to the primary head would be represented in the county or divisional inspectorate. In the primary sector, most LEAs delegated responsibility for a particular school to a particular inspector. Much depended on that inspector's speciality, interests, personality, and frequency of visits, as to what influence was exercised upon the role of the head. A local inspector had the potential to act as a change-agent in matters of curriculum development (Becher and Maclure 1980) although he could also have a constraining influence. Part of the role of the local inspectorate was to promote curriculum development and change, and many LEAs saw consultations between heads and inspectors as instrumental in that process (Smith B. 1987).

The changing structures for the management of education and the declining role of the LEA will have implications for the degree of influence which is either likely or possible in the future. But many LEAs are continuing to have some influence on the role of the head through the various induction

courses they provide for newly appointed heads (Bromley 1997; KCC 1997). But as in other areas of change, the effects of those factors which informed and moulded the service to date, often have residual effects, after they have been discontinued.

Influence on the head's role by HMI was generally indirect as their personal contact with heads was considerably less than that of the local inspectorate (Morrison and McIntyre 1969). They were in a position to advise on schemes of work, teaching methods, and so on, but not determine the curriculum (N.U.T. 1972). Their main influence came through the publications which went into schools and stimulated discussion on the various topics they covered (Becher and Maclure 1980). Their general publications (D.E.S. 1977d, 1981, 1985) and specific publications on particular areas of the curriculum (D.E.S. 1986) illustrate the way their influence was generated. In addition, HMI organised courses, research projects and undertook inspections and the heads of schools involved in these activities were most likely to be influenced by them. The independence of HMI from the DES, has been gradually weakened and the development of the newer forms of inspection through OFSTED, and the considerable reduction of HMI, suggests that the main thrust of influence from this source will be reduced.

3.10 THE HEAD AS MANAGER

The head is recognised as the person who carries the ultimate responsibility for the management of his school (Briault 1976; Menter et al 1995) even if the overall control and management legally rests with the governors (K.C.C. 1989; DfEE 1997). He is expected to have considerable manage-

ment skills (Edmonds 1968; Wallis 1968; Bacon 1978; Spear 1987; D.E.S. 1987b; Webb and Vulliamy 1996; Coppice 1997) involving decisions on policy, people, resources, time, plant, communication (C.A.C.E. 1967; D.E.S. 1987b), determining curricula, teaching methods, budgetary control, relations with parents, community and the wider educational system (Steinman 1971; Dixon 1997). His management of people and resources has obvious consequences for curriculum control and development (Johnston and Pickersgill 1992). Good management is seen in the head's concern for the effective deployment of human and physical resources (Briault 1976). Through his management the provision of the right sort of developmental environment and framework should be possible (Campbell 1985; Davies 1987).

Various management strategies have been identified but these will depend largely on the size of the school (Webb and Vulliamy 1996). The techniques of Organisational Development (Schmuck and Miles 1971; Richardson 1973, 1975; Thomas 1975) rely on a participative approach, in which the head facilitates change by means of decisions and structures developed from a shared cooperative team approach in which he participates but is not necessarily the driving force. His decision to allow this approach demonstrates his control over the decision-making processes in the school. The development of sex education is ideally perceived as a co-operative - consultative venture (Lenderyou 1993; DfEE 1994; Collyer 1995; Ray and Went 1995).

The power-coercive strategy contains various elements all of which focus on the ability of one person in a position of power to influence and exercise control over decisions (Chin 1967; Bennis et al. 1969). Dalin (1974)

referred to the political-administrative strategy as being the same as the power-coercive set and suggested that the use of such methods had been taken for granted in an historical and social climate where authoritarian leadership was accepted as the only leadership style. There will be tension between 'top down' and collegiate styles (Webb and Vulliamy 1996).

According to Chin (1967) and Hoyle (1970) the power-coercive method of autocratic management had given way to the rational-empirical or normative-re-educative strategies. The rational-empirical set (Chin 1967; Bennis et al 1969) saw the innovator (head) demonstrating through the best known method, the validity of an innovation in terms of the benefit gained from adopting it. In the case of the normative-re-educative strategy the innovator assesses how the client sees the problem and sets out to change attitudes, skills, values and relationships, acknowledging the client's value-system and working with the client to effect change (Dalin 1974).

It does not follow that a head would always use the same strategy to effect change and could use one strategy for one change and a different approach for another (Wallace 1992). The notion of a more flexible and shared basis for curriculum decision-making, while often declared as being standard policy in a school is generally not consistently applied. It is probable that heads use the best methods to achieve their objectives and the different ways in which heads exercise their management tasks mean that they have control over the form and direction of development in their schools (Campbell 1985). Management is becoming more problematic due to current reforms (Dunning 1996) and could deflect heads from a strong curriculum leadership role (Menter et al 1995). As a result of recent

reforms many heads are adopting a collegiate style of management (Johnston and Pickersgill 1992) some feel they are now managers first and teachers second (Hellowell 1991).

Innovative initiative comes from the head (Brickell 1961; Chesler, Schmuck and Lippit 1963; Allen 1967; Hughes 1975; Muse and Wallace 1988). The development of an overall strategy for change was part of the head's role (Gross et al 1971; Southworth 1988). Bradshaw (1978) argued that the head's role in innovation lay largely in advising and persuading and it could not be denied that a head had a vast armoury of strategies to inhibit change with which he did not agree (Webb and Vulliamy 1996a).

Within his role a head has the function to generate his own ideas and to adopt the ideas of others for his school (Allen 1967). A head was able to institute new subjects and ways of teaching (Reller 1968; Coulson 1976) but the National Curriculum now prescribes most of the areas set for the primary curriculum. He still has considerable innovative power and influence and is recognised as being the one person who is in overall control (Briault 1976; Coulson 1976; Menter et al 1995).

The head's role as an innovator is a crucial element of his responsibilities (Miles 1964; Owen 1970; Campbell 1985; Mason 1987; Craig 1990). The popular concept that a head has the capability to introduce innovation whenever he wishes is a role which most heads actually saw themselves as occupying (Bacon 1978; Southworth 1988). Ways in which heads seek to innovate will be very closely linked with their management strategies and particularly their methods of administration and styles of leadership, but

concern has been expressed that heads are often untrained in curriculum management (Owen 1974).

The idea of 'innovator general' has been questioned. The widening of the primary curriculum and the introduction of the National Curriculum have created difficulties for the head in keeping abreast of developments. A strategy suggested to meet the problem has been more staff participation in innovation (C.A.C.E. 1967; Johnston and Pickersgill 1992; Webb and Vulliamy 1996). Earlier ideas that the initiative for innovation came from the class teacher and not the head (Bradshaw 1978) are still possible now by teachers' input into the whole-school development style procedures (Jones and Hayes 1991). The rise of subject specialists in primary schools and the widening of subject areas were seen to be gradually eroding the head's dominance over the curriculum (Mack 1976; Richards 1995; Dunning 1996). But the audit of specialist knowledge to improve the delivery of the curriculum (including the head's own specialist knowledge) again places the head in a key role for innovation and development (Richards 1995).

Campbell (1985) recognised the major role of the head as innovator tended to be seen as the head exercising this role mostly in the manner of the prime facilitator due mainly to the amount of expertise now required for the wide curriculum. Nevertheless whether the head is the main innovator or facilitator the long established concept of his priority for fostering innovation (Miles 1965) places him in a strong position to influence the whole process of curriculum development in the school.

The head has long been expected to introduce new ideas and keep in touch

with the latest developments (Board of Education 1937; Boydell 1990; OFSTED 1994). It is reasonable to expect that a head would consider it a duty to keep up to date and aware of what was going on in the educational world (Allen 1967; Briault 1976). It is vital for a head to keep abreast of new ideas and methods and to engage in further study (Mason 1987). Johnson (1966) found a high correlation between the attitude of the head to educational research and the attitudes of his staff. Some heads were involved in educational research, or developmental work through in-service training (Southworth 1993). While heads have been exhorted and expected to keep abreast of current ideas, developments and issues, it was recognised that many found it difficult, if not impossible to do so (C.A.C.E. 1967; Dearden 1976) and even more so now, in the present climate of uncertainty and perpetual change (Dunning 1996; Webb and Vulliamy 1996).

Manager, innovator, facilitator, and other roles put heads in a powerful position of control over the curriculum and add further to the likelihood that the implementation of sex education is dependent upon their influence.

3.11 PARENTS' INFLUENCE ON HEAD'S ROLE

Human forces and tensions within a school influence the head as much, though in different ways as forces and tensions from outside.

"...a school is a human organisation generating its own forces, creating its own tensions and striving to satisfy its own needs."

(Whitaker 1983).

Parents' influence on heads' decision-making has long been recognised especially as the relationship between parents and school is an essential feature of the British system. The aim to meet and serve the needs of the

children implies a consideration of parents' wishes. Edmonds (1968) had summarised this concept and pointed out that parents and pupils needed to be in agreement or sympathetic with the decisions that were made (see also: Jones and Hayes 1991). In some cases parents have been seen in the role of paying the piper and therefore form a group to be complied with in terms of meeting the majority interests in a market-economy framework (Jones and Hayes 1991).

Steinman (1971) identified the need for a head to establish relations with parents as part of his role. Heads have a role to forge links with parents as part of their professional duties (D.E.S. 1987b; Webb and Vulliamy 1996a). Davies (1987) suggested ways in which parents could be involved by the head in the decision-making process. Parents have been given important roles in contributing to the ways schools are managed through the boards of governors and have been seen by central government as a legitimate influence in shaping educational provision (Education Acts 1980 and 1986). Whether heads see parental representation as effective collaboration or a meddlesome nuisance, they nevertheless see themselves as having ultimate responsibility (Memter et al 1995).

The head's role required public relations skills (D.E.S. 1977b). Becher et al. (1981) described the head as the controller of the school's transactions with the outside world and staff valued the head's role which supported their work and explained it to the parents (Webb and Vulliamy 1996). In consultation with the staff and governors it is part of the head's role to decide how best to achieve full cooperation between parents and school (N.U.T. 1972). This partnership is said to benefit the

educational process and heads are having to respond more to parental expectations (Whitaker 1983). Heads are feeling a greater degree of accountability to parents (Webb and Vulliamy 1996a) and the need to be explicit about curriculum areas which are not wholly prescribed by the National Curriculum (Richards 1995). This has implications for topics like sex education and validates the need for consultation with the parents (DfE 1994; Went 1994; Harris n. 1996a; Bradney 1996; Thomson 1996).

Support of the head by parents, pupils and staff is vital if innovative change is to succeed (Stone and Taylor 1976) and emphasises the head's role in establishing and maintaining good communication with them (C.A.C.E. 1967; Steinman 1971; Morris 1978; D.E.S. 1987b; Webb and Vulliamy 1996). Edmonds (1968) maintained that communication through the PTA would help contribute towards the moral, spiritual, emotional and social health of children by the increased understanding such associations offered. Some might think such conclusions were idealistic though they had implications for sex education.

There is a body of opinion which regards the concept of 'parental choice', or 'parent power', as a form of political window-dressing, which gives the impression of handing power down to the people, but in fact is effectively reducing the power of the local authority, and placing greater influence in the hands of central government.

Primary teachers have always fulfilled a strong 'parenting' role, arising partly through the nature of the job and also by being in loco parentis.

While children are in the charge of the teachers they are expected to act towards them as any diligent parent would.

In addition to the 'parental' relationship a teacher has to the children, since the early 1960s it has been recognised that the pastoral role of the teacher has extended his functions to include the skills and interests of the social worker (Mays 1965). Plowden (1967) implied that the teacher's role had gone beyond that which might have been regarded as 'parental'. Finlayson and Cohen (1967) found that heads were strongly in favour of interpreting right and wrong for pupils, and Westwood (1966) found that heads felt the need to protect children from wrong or anti-social values of the community. It is acknowledged that schools aim to inculcate values, and that there has been a duty placed on teachers to ensure that their own values were of such a kind as to be acceptable for the children to 'catch' (C,A,C.E. 1967). Parental concepts have consequences for decisions concerning matters like sex education.

3.12 SUMMARY

This Section has aimed to show that heads are in positions of power, authority and influence which have significant bearing on the management and development of the curriculum in their schools. Their roles are determined by legal, traditional and social factors; and sustained and developed by a range of influences and expectations from the heads themselves, and significant others. The main role of headship encapsulates other, equally influential roles.

Throughout the consideration of the various roles heads occupy, the focus has been on the influence each role is capable of bringing to the development of the curriculum, and by implication separate areas of the curriculum. If the head's influence, which in this chapter has tended to be discussed in general terms is applied in particular to the implementation of sex education, it must be seen that the head is in a significantly powerful position to either hinder or enhance its introduction and development.

There is no other single person in the primary school who is in this unique position of influence.

CHAPTER 4 WHAT IS SEX EDUCATION ?

4.1 INTRODUCTION

What heads understand by the term 'sex education' will influence whether or not they will want it in their schools. It could comprise all the facts and concepts they consider appropriate for their children or a range of topics which they regard as quite out of place. Equally, the content of materials available for sex education could be inappropriate for some and inadequate for others. There might be difficulties in matching what heads regard as appropriate with what is available.

In this chapter definitions from the literature, from other primary headteachers and by inference from the content of some schemes are considered. Those from the literature often focus on the nature, quality and rationale of sex education. Those from primary heads result from earlier investigations of what the majority of heads would include in sex education. Definitions implied from the content of published schemes include a wider range of topics than the others. Heads who support sex education will find much published material non-problematic but I believe many heads will be influenced against sex education by the inclusion of what they see as controversial topics.

I do not propose a common definition for the purpose of this study. There is no consensus of what constitutes sex education (Fidge 1978). It soon becomes clear that:

" There are now probably as many definitions of sex education as there are people who have tried to define it."

(Farrell 1978).

4.2 DEFINITIONS FROM THE LITERATURE

Heads have their own perceptions of what they consider sex education to entail and their understanding will probably influence their decisions whether or not to promote it in their schools. Apparent changes in public opinion do not necessarily herald much change in individual attitudes.

" Sex education remains, despite a changing social climate and wider acceptance of the value of sex education, a very emotive subject. In examining the literature and in talking to parents, teachers and young people themselves, it has become evident that there is a great range of firmly held opinions as to how and when, and in what context, it should be approached, if at all."
(Y.L.G. 1978).

Thirty years ago sex education was seen to require a considered introduction into schools:

" Sex education is a demanding new field, and hopefully schools will stop handing it over to the first staff member who volunteers to teach it."
(Isenan 1968).

In attempting a definition of sex education Rogers (1974) saw a personified 'society' deciding to validate a child's incidentally-acquired sex knowledge with formal sex education in school:

" A generally acceptable definition of sex education would perhaps be a deliberate decision on the part of society to compliment (sic) learning which occurs incidentally through a child's own observations of reality (both directly and vicariously through the eyes of the mass media) with information provided in a deliberate, structured educational situation. Such educational decisions do not arise accidentally but rather are the result of the recognition of a state of need, either on the part of the child or of society at large."

(Rogers 1974).

A 'deliberate decision on the part of society' seems a highly questionable concept since probably fewer than 25% of primary schools had sex education at the time (Fidge 1978). There was no groundswell of societal opinion carrying all forward realising the necessity to introduce sex education.

Very wide opinions regarding sex education and the different philosophical positions taken over it, in the late 1960s were aptly described by Johnson (1968). The seven educational philosophies could be summarised:

1. The best sex education is no sex education at all.
 2. Sex education should be quite frank and highly moral and/or religious.
 3. The street is the best place to learn about sex.
 4. Sexual information is best if it has the effect of shock treatment; unrestrictedly frank and blunt.
 5. If children's minds are kept off sex by being kept busy with educational and other healthy activities, sexual problems can be avoided and the need for sex education reduced to a minimum.
 6. Sex and love should be accepted and blended in human life, because sex is the prime aspect of the human personality and not the least.
 7. Sex education is best learnt as a do-it-yourself activity.
- (Johnson 1968).

" But 'sex education' is an elusive term. To some it seems to mean the biology of reproduction - where babies come from and why. But this is not really sex education: a student can learn all about reproduction without gaining an understanding of sex. To others it seems to mean 'how to behave on a date'.....
(Woodring 1969).

So elusive, Woodring (1969) cannot produce a coherent definition either.

Docherty (1986) described two opposing views based on one's understanding of the needs and nature of children. The 'sexlessness' scenario and the subsequent negation of sex education is included towards the end of this chapter but his argument for sex education was advanced in terms of the child's right to uncensored information about what was ahead:

" Another school of thought starts from the understanding that children have a powerful natural sexuality which needs to be recognised and respected, that their curiosity is healthy and not prurient; and that by the time they are approaching puberty they have not only a need for but also a right to uncensored information about what lies ahead."

(Docherty 1986).

The elusiveness of sex education is due to many factors but difficulties which arise due to the emotive overtones it has generated and the taboo factor which often operates in sexual matters may provide some explanation

why some heads are reluctant to introduce it. Taboo over sexual matters is a powerful negating agent for sex education and research (Kadri 1967; Thomas 1978; Goldman and Goldman 1982; Ghulam 1996; Bridgerman 1996).

" When the word SEX is mentioned it arouses all sorts of mixed feelings in different individuals. It may produce feelings of curiosity, pleasure, or even disgust, depending on one's background and upbringing.....To some extent the subject of sex is taboo.'
(Kadri 1967).

The controversies range from simply whether or not to include it, the age to begin, the content to be covered, the suitability of materials to be used, to the need for addressing urgent public issues such as AIDS and gayness, and so on. There are several approaches to the possible controversy which can surround implementing sex education but the need to consult widely before proceeding was seen to be a sensible precaution to take:

" Because of the controversial nature of this curriculum area (sex education and family life education RF), school officials should determine the degree of parental and community support for a family life and sex education program."
(Yarber 1979).

Some of the issues like, sexual orientation and roles, different family styles and 'non-standard' relationships, have been reflected in the literature (Alyson et al. 1980; Trenchard and Warren 1984; C.L.T.A. (N.U.T) 1987; Harris 1990) and in books for primary aged children (Blank 1982; Bosche 1983; Newman 1989; Willhoite 1990) and are seen as appropriate for inclusion in primary sex education (Goldman and Goldman 1988; Lenderyou 1993; Cohen 1997). So the advice that:

" A purely heterosexual approach to sex education ignores the fact that by no means all sexual orientations are towards the opposite sex. It is important to recognise that perhaps one person in ten may be homosexual in any group."
(C.C. 1989).

could well act as a cautionary factor for some heads, when considering the issues involved in primary school sex education. Concern might also be

felt for moves to debate sexual taboos and double standards in support of a movement for compulsory primary sex education (F.Y.C. 1995)

One of Johnson's (1968) sex education philosophies that 'sexual information is best if it has the effect of shock treatment, by being unrestrictedly frank and blunt' illustrates a particular outlook which sees sex education primarily as a means of trying to stop children's sexual interest and activity by means of fear and anxiety. Shock tactics are meant to dissuade children from sexual activity and using sex education to repress (or at least keep from sight) all pre-marital sexual activity is not new:

" Sex education has long been considered a phase of instruction which ideally should be given in the home. The purpose has been to inform children about physical growth and development, to give details on reproduction, and above all, to repress (or at least keep from sight) all pre-marital sexual activity."
(Kirkendall and Miles 1968).

If children's minds are kept off sex by withholding information (Gamage 1989) or being kept busy with educational and healthy activities the need for sex education can be reduced to a minimum (Johnson 1968). This 'minimal' philosophy allows an apparent acceptance of sex education - idealising and mystifying it (Massey 1990) - while ensuring that nothing is heard, or there is too much to do so that sex education rarely happens. It is a short step from that position to scrupulously avoiding it.

" To say that sex education is the most neglected area of instruction just about everywhere would be both commonplace and at the same time a gross understatement. For sex education is not only neglected, it is actively and scrupulously avoided."

(Kronhausen and Kronhausen 1969).

Uncertainties about legalities, parents' and governors' views, their own views, attitudes and anxieties and controversial concepts cause teachers to adopt a policy of avoidance (Farquhar 1990; Scott and Thomson 1992).

There are very few examples of proponents for the position of 'no sex education at all'. There are many examples of:

- a. delayed sex education, where the advocates are suggesting starting at say 14 - 15 years of age,
- b. substantial 'editing' of the possible content of sex education programmes to render them 'acceptable and proper',
- c. adopting a policy of 'sex education by question only' which safeguards the apparent willingness to have sex education, but which virtually guarantees there will not be any,
- d. home-based sex education only.

Heads who agree with any of these positions will probably reflect an unwillingness to come out strongly for sex education and prefer not to have sex education in their schools. This unwillingness to promote sex education will stem either from a deeply held conviction or the need to avoid the conflict or other problems they perceive.

The position of 'no sex education at all' is untenable as all children will get some kind of sex education albeit in a random fashion from a variety of sources. So what is clear from those who adopt the 'no sex education stance' is that they either mean 'no school-based sex education', or fail to realise that some form of sex education is unavoidable in our society.

Pirone (1969) saw sex education as unnecessary for the most children:

" I hold that about seventy percent of all children do not need sex education, should not be exposed to any form of sex education, are more hurt than helped by the information made available to them in even the best existing programs of sex education. Moreover, I hold that the remaining thirty percent of the population require intensive homosexual education because their basic sex instincts are perverted."

(Pirone 1969).

Others appear to subscribe to this 'no sex education at all' philosophy since one of the positions identified by Johnson (1969) was:

The best sex education is no sex education at all.
(Johnson 1968).

Though many object that current sex education is unsuitable or harmful (Atkin 1995; Danon 1995; F.Y.C. 1995/6). Others see sex education as a continuous process. Both Bibby (1944) and Chanter (1966) are examples of that position. Bibby saw the process as being one which should have some deliberate order throughout life. Chanter saw it as an inevitable process which happened come what may, but it was best if it happened in a structured and planned way.

" Sex education should surely be a continuous process from the cradle to the grave."
(Bibby 1944).

" Sex education is a continuous process. If parents and teachers take no active part in this it will still go on, but in an uncontrolled way."
(Chanter 1966).

Unlike Bibby's (1944) 'cradle to grave' concept (see also Went 1988), the Board of Education were moving sex education forward in recommending an early pre-pubertal start:

" It is increasingly realised however that there are great advantages in introducing the subject at an early age before strong emotional associations develop. In fact, the elements of sex instruction should begin as soon as the child begins to ask questions."
(Board of Education 1943).

Not everyone working in this area would agree that the asking of questions is necessarily the signal to begin sex education especially when no questions are asked (Collyer 1995).

Johnson (1968), hinted at the inevitability of obtaining sex information from one's environment:

The street is the best place to learn about sex.

(Johnson 1968).

The certainty and inevitability of peer group/street/media learning about sex (Gammage 1989; Reiss 1995) needs to be understood by heads and adults generally, especially those who seek to minimise the need for sex education by somehow trying to keep children's minds off the subject. Reiss (1968) argued the case to recognise the child's certain acquisition of knowledge through his peer and street-type contacts, and infers the need to validate this body of potentially inaccurate information:

" By minimising talk about sex, one does not end the sexual interests of the child. The child still plays the same sex games of curiosity and exploration with other children. Sexual information, accurate or not, and sexual attitudes of various sorts inevitably filter down from older boys and girls.....There is no way for parents to stop this."

(Reiss 1968).

David and Wise (1987) provided a summary of the position as being very much the same as had been reported in the past.

" Sex education is not a singular crusade undertaken solely by those with a calling, but happens all the time, both within and outside family life, as the result of accidental, incidental and planned experiences."

(David and Wise 1987).

Telling children 'the facts of life', like the term 'sex education' itself is an expression which has no commonly understood meaning, beyond having something to do with reproduction. For one head the theoretical notion of sex education included only - plants (seeds etc), animal seeds (frog spawn etc), chicks/puppies/kittens etc. (Fidge 1978b) and so for some heads the 'facts of life', might not necessarily even refer to human reproduction. In the early 1930s the 'facts' were seen as a good starting point and an essential part of 'sex instruction' as distinct from 'sex education'.

" I do not claim that mere knowledge of the process of reproduction constitutes sex education.But....it gives a necessary foundation to the proper outlook..... We are only at the begin-

ning of sex education.... Thousands of adults do not know the simplest facts..... Through biology we are able to give sex instruction as a distinct part of sex education.... Questions of morals and behaviour must be decided elsewhere (not in biology RF).... Such things as art, tradition and religion must greatly influence our attitudes towards sex."

(Ottaway 1935).

There may not be universal agreement that sex education involves more than teaching just the facts of reproduction. The sex education which is seen forming part of a child's natural and incidental learning processes, taking in information, ideas, concepts, and so on, from its surroundings, includes much more than 'the facts'. In fact it could be said to exclude exact factual information more often than not, even though the child will be learning a lot about human sexuality. School-based sex education has often been proposed in order to correct or provide factual information lacking from the incidental process. Agreeing that sex education, means more than just the 'facts of life' (Gamage 1989; Reiss 1995) may be seen, for example, in Bibby (1944), D.E.S. (1975), and David and Wise (1987):

" Yet sex education is more than the mere imparting of information. Knowledge of the truth is very rarely harmful and usually beneficial, so that any person who helps to clear away the vast mountain of ignorance on this subject may feel that some good has been done.

(Bibby 1944).

" Most of the teachers and headteachers, while having different views regarding the boundaries of sex education, agreed that it was something more than the presentation of the details of human physiology and reproduction, in biology."

(D.E.S. 1975).

" To equate sex education solely with factual information is like viewing geography in terms of national boundaries, history as a chronology of battle dates, and drama as the reading of play scripts."

(David and Wise 1987).

While it cannot be said that there is agreement, even over which 'facts' should be taught, once one goes beyond the idea of the facts, matters can

become even more contentious. In addition to the facts, their relationship to social conventions is important. Factual information is indispensable, but it is also necessary to interpret for the pupils the relationship between the facts of human anatomy and physiology and the conventions of human society (Ray and Went 1995).

Hemming (1971a) felt certain developmental aspects and other qualities are important in developing sexual maturity:

" Equally recent is the realisation that sex education extends far beyond the imparting of information about the procreative process, it also embraces emotional development, personal sensitivity, social responsibility and other qualities which are at the root of sexual maturity."

(Hemming 1971a).

The fact that sex education is not an academic discipline (Woodring 1969), has meant that it has not been regarded very highly in terms of the hierarchical structure of the curriculum (Gammage 1989; Scott and Thomson 1992) and tends to be a low priority for some even though aspects of it have been included in the National Curriculum. This has meant that it has been on the agenda for inclusion in the curriculum for some years, but there are many factors preventing it becoming unquestionably part of the primary curriculum.

Even though sex education is not said to be an academic subject we are urged to..... teach facts and principles:

" Sex is not an academic discipline.....
.....schools and colleges can and should continue
to teach the facts and principles relating to sex..."

(Woodring 1969).

Few schools would have had the opportunity of facilitating a 'learning by doing' situation, referred to by Woodring (1969) but this is certainly an ideal way of learning essential aspects of sex. To afford children the practical experience of the skills they are trying to learn is a valid and valuable fundamental educational principle though many would interpret this in terms of role-play techniques (C.C. 1990; Lenderyou 1993; Ray and Went 1995). Most heads would regard this as problematic, if not irregular, since there is an unwillingness on the part of most adults to appear to be encouraging children to indulge in sexual activity (Yates 1978), yet in other cultures it is quite normal to do so (Mead 1935 [1977 edn]; Goldman and Goldman 1988).

The Clarity Collective (1990) while acknowledging the need for factual information over a range of sex-related issues, identified the development of self-esteem as the central aim of sex education. In developing this they see it necessary to have regard to such matters as, day to day pressures, concerns and conflicts, exploration of values and attitudes:

" Some years ago.... theorists were emphasising that sex education should be more than just biology, reproduction and contraceptive technology. Young people are constantly making decisions about their sexuality which incorporates how they express themselves as females and males and how they relate to each other. While they do need information on topics such as sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, sexual preferences and masturbation, this information alone does not provide them with the skills necessary to resolve day to day pressures, concerns and conflicts.

Young people want reassurance about body image, behaviour and relationships. We are convinced that the planning and presentation of sex education should encompass the opportunity for exploration of values and attitudes, and the growth of skills necessary to build relationships, communicate and make decisions.

Central to this conviction is the concept of self-esteem. A major part of human dignity is feeling good about one's self. The development of high self-esteem in young people is an essential aspect of education. If young people feel positive

about themselves, they are more likely to develop non-exploitive, caring relationships, and are themselves less likely to be exploited by others.

Self-esteem is the core of our framework...."

(C.C. 1989).

(See also Blank 1982; Went 1988; Sanders and Swinden 1990; Lenderyou 1993).

Sexuality and sexual meaning is formed and influenced by society:

'Sex and sexuality are not timeless, universal, biological givens but historical and cultural constructs.'

(Porter and Hall 1995).

'Sex is the product of the society in which it exists.

Sex education frameworks can regulate young people's sexuality.'

(Haywood 1996).

Some sex educators see sex education, as primarily addressing social issues, while others see the prime aim towards personal matters. This focus could be very influential on heads, depending on what issues are important to them. Social issues could be said to include personal issues as society is made up of individuals and the ways in which they behave and develop shapes the society in which they live (D.E.S. 1986). But social issues often seem to depersonalise the individual into units of society, so that it is possible to feel the need to concentrate on the individual, and to address matters of individual development, individuality, personal relationships and the like, without particularly concerning oneself with the subsequent corporate effect which that might have on the larger society in which the individual is developing.

In referring to the notion of sex education being largely the responsibility of the home and consisting simply of the transmission of specific facts Kirkendall and Miles (1968) pointed out that sex education, developed from such insular views when educators were cognisant of changing social circumstances.

- " Changing social and cultural circumstances (for example, a greater openness about sex; a collapse in the power to motivate for chaste conduct by instilling fears of possible premarital pregnancy, venereal infection, or community censure; cross-cultural exchanges; changing sex roles; a mounting body of research which has exposed new facets of sex) have combined to topple these insular views. No sex education program can be effective today, without taking these developments, and others, into account."

(Kirkendall and Miles 1968).

Hemming (1971a) saw sex education in terms of converting the egocentric into the socially responsible:

- " Whatever helps growth so that one (the egocentric infant) is gradually transformed into the other (socially responsible adult), may properly be regarded as sex education."

(Hemming 1971a).

Fleischhauer-Hardt (1975) moved from the development of trust in a child within the family to what she calls 'basic social trust', which seems to be a loving trust for society beyond the family and which is encouraged to develop through sex education:

- " Sex education, like all education, should begin in infancy, within the family..... A child will feel at ease only in an environment which he can always trust, where he always feels safe and secure. And only here will he be able to develop basic trust. 'Basic social trust' is the basis of the capacity for love. The eminent child psychiatrist Erik Erikson uses the term 'basic trust' to mean 'the individual's trust in the world and in mankind'..... It is therefore important for education in general, but especially for sex education to encourage the development of basic social trust."

(Fleischhauer-Hardt 1975).

With regard to personal issues, sex education encourages the development of greater autonomy, caring attitudes for one another, responsible human relationships and personal responsibility (Winn 1984; Went 1988; C.C. 1990; Blair and Furniss 1995). Fleming (1963) referred to human relations in general and their link with satisfactory family relationships:

- " Sex education is not simply giving information about menstruation and nocturnal emissions - nor showing films of the life history of the amoeba or frog, or the route of the sperm. Nor the discussion of secondary sex characteristics - nor the

reassurance that masturbation and erotic sensations are relatively harmless. Nor does it need an explanation of courtship techniques or sexual intercourse positions.

It is however, important that the adolescent be helped - often in apparently casual fashion - to realise that this problem is bound up with the much larger one of human relations in general and that the decisions made, in connection with physical intercourse with the opposite sex are intimately linked with the establishment at later ages of satisfactory relations within a family."

(Fleming 1963).

The provision of a comprehensive conceptual framework of the ways sex affects the total personality of the individual (Diamond 1984; Calderone and Johnson 1990) with the need for children to develop responsible sexuality was central to Bennell's (1969) main aims for the sex aspect of a health education programme.

" With varying degrees of cognition and motivation teachers are introducing the subject of sex into the classroom. Today a school health education program should offer students a comprehensive conceptual framework of the ways sex affects the total personality of the individual, the cohesiveness of the family, and the norms and values of the society in which one lives. Students need to develop the concept of warm, mature and responsible sexuality."

(Bennell 1969).

Sex education should make people more able to satisfy their sexual needs:

" We all have sexual needs and sex education should in principle render us more able to satisfy them. It should open up a wider range of possible forms of behaviour and therefore give us greater autonomy of choice."

(Harris 1974).

Concepts of love and morality, and the skills of communication and caring, are what sex education is all about (Leckum 1975; White 1976; Quinn and Quinn 1981; Huggett 1986)

" My final segment is about what I think we need to do about sex education in the schools. We are the ones who are pro-life and pro-family. We had better talk about family life education, we had better talk about preparation for parenting.And so, we have to introduce programs into our schools that talk about self-concept and self-affirmation.... Our subject matter is love, communication, caring for another

person, morality... I say that attempting to teach sexuality without morals is bankruptcy.."

(Gordon 1979).

Values, standards and personal responsibility, are as important as basic factual information (TES 1993; Patten 1994; Ray and Went 1995; Reiss 1995).

" In sex education, factual information about the physical aspects of sex, though important, is not more important than consideration of the values, standards and the exercise of personal responsibility as they affect individuals and the community at large."
(D.E.S. 1986).

Sex education is about responsible decisions and self-esteem (Went 1988)

"sex education is about helping children to make responsible decisions about the relationships that they form with others. When considering ourselves in relation to others, the area of self-esteem also comes into play. Helping children to develop a positive sense of self will involve discussions about choice-making, assertiveness, self-expression and, in turn, respect for others."

(Sanders and Swinden 1990).

Many sex educators do not focus only on one major developmental area, but draw together the social, personal, and various other areas, which will often lead to a very wide range of topics to be included in sex education (Went 1988; Massey 1990; Cohen 1997). The 'all-inclusiveness' of this kind of approach could be an impediment (McLeod and Davies 1992; Hart 1995; Oddie 1995) for some heads since it means that such a wide approach could take sex education into areas with which they may be unprepared or unwilling to cope.

In both the W.H.O. (1954) and Guest (1964) one found examples of the very wide sweep of issues which were said to require consideration or inclusion for effective sex and health education. .

" It is only after a thorough study of the people, their attitudes, interests, beliefs, cultural values, wants, needs and resources that the most effective health education can evolve and ultimately effect a working partnership between the people and their health programmes."

(W.H.O. 1954).

- " Sex education is instruction to develop understanding of the physical, mental, emotional, social, economic and psychological phases of human relations as they are affected by male-female relationships."

(Guest 1964).

Harris (1974) concentrated on the implications of the word 'education' in sex education which, if it is to be judged by the same criteria as other areas of education, will mean providing the maximum possible degree of knowledge and understanding concerning sexual behaviour

- " In the first place I want to take the word 'education' seriously. Education is not identical with such processes as instruction, training or indoctrination. It is not just the teaching of facts, or the imparting of skills. It is quite incompatible with such an aim as making people behave in a certain way. Education aims at initiating people into worthwhile activities concerned with learning and understanding. Sex education, therefore, cannot (logically) be only the giving of certain facts, or only training in relevant skills (whatever those might be). Nor can it involve imposing a particular attitude toward 'sexual morality'. What it must achieve, if it is to be judged by the same criteria as other areas of education, is the maximum possible degree of knowledge and understanding concerning sexual behaviour."

(Harris 1974).

And for Honey (1978) sex education may be found in anything from poetry to

- " Lessons on anything from poetry to world food problems may involve sex education; although to many people, unfortunately, the term suggests only biological instruction. A complete survey of sex education would have to include Primary and Secondary schools, not only biological information but also moral education and education in personal relationships, by many different teachers using a variety of methods...."

(Honey 1978).

Clearly therefore, sex education is bound up with the whole of life:

- " Sex education is no fenced off area of life either to be avoided or to be plunged into without due regard for a child's lack of understanding or the neighbourhood and family in which he lives."

(Wake 1966).

The links between social, personal, moral and ethical aspects of sexual development and education with due consideration for spiritual, emotional, moral and cultural aspects are seen as central to most recent sex education material and advice (Lenderyou 1993; DfE 1994; Ray and Went 1995).

For some, sex education is about concepts of love and caring (Fleming 1963; Johnson 1968; Gordon 1979). For others it is concerned with marriage, parenthood and wider family matters, including the protection of the family (White and Kidd 1976; R.S. 1982; Riches 1986; Sedway 1992). While these issues could be seen in terms of maintaining a stable society based on love and the family, they particularly represent the views of some who oppose 'modern' sex education with its alleged thrust to destroy the fabric of our family-based society (Riches 1986; Thwaites 1986; Danon 1995).

Fleming (1963) saw sex education as guidance towards these ends:

" Sex education, therefore is increasingly being thought of as part of a wider guidance in the best accumulated wisdom as to the laws of inheritance, the care of the young, the complexities of family inter-relationships and the like."

(Fleming 1963).

Johnson (1968) referred to those who recognised sex as the prime aspect of the human personality and linked it with love.

Sex and love should be accepted and blended in human life, because sex is the prime aspect of the human personality and not the least.

(Johnson 1968).

The idea of sex partners outside marriage or the major preoccupation of some types of sex education which concentrated on producing satisfactory sex partners to the detriment or exclusion of other loving and family skills, is roundly attacked by White and Kidd (1976) who saw sex education as teaching children how to be loving, responsible and married home-makers (see also: Whitehouse 1977; Riches c1993; Davies 1993 F.E.T. c1995).

"ideally sex education should be within the wider context of love and marriage, and bringing up children and making a home. It is education in how to be loving, of which sexual relations are a very important part, but only a part. Children need to be taught how to grow into responsible and caring husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, and not just how to be satisfactory sex partners."

(White and Kidd 1976).

In addition to seeing the need for sex education as being most concerned with love, communication and caring for another person Gordon (1979) added morality as a fundamental element:

" My final segment is about what I think we need to do about sex education in the schools. We are the ones who are pro-life and pro-family. We had better talk about family life education, we had better talk about preparation for parenting.And so, we have to introduce programs into our schools that talk about self-concept and self-affirmation.... Our subject matter is love, communication, caring for another person, morality... I say that attempting to teach sexuality without morals is bankruptcy.."

(Gordon 1979).

The aim to destroy the family (R.S. 1982) was the objective of dedicated liberal sex educators, and by inference, the need to resist such sex education. Similarly the protection of human values using sex education programmes promoting marriage and parenthood was advocated (Riches 1986).

" The declared aim of the front runners of this lobby (dedicated liberal sex educators RF) is to work towards a society in which 'archaic sex laws...are non-existent': those laws which help to preserve the family as the basic unit of society and lay the foundation for civilised sexual standards."

(R.S. 1982).

" If sex education is given in schools, the Society (F.Y.C. RF) urges that it should be treated with sensitivity by people of integrity, with the full co-operation of parents and with the aim of preparing young people for marriage and parenthood. The Society considers it essential that children should be protected from exposure to types of sex education which are amoral in content and whose purpose is to erode human values which have evolved over thousands of years."

(Riches 1986).

The difficulty in emphasising sex education in terms of morality and

religion is whose morality or religion is to be emphasised ? Different groups, cultures and faiths promulgate their own philosophies and beliefs. Trying to impose these on non-members of that group, or trying to impose unacceptable tenets from some 'neutral' or general sex education programme or scheme, on members of particular groups, could be equally problematic (e.g. Sarwar 1989; K.T.E.S. 1991; Concern 1994; Reiss 1995). Nevertheless, Johnson (1968) identified those who felt that:

Sex education should be quite frank and highly moral and/or religious.

(Johnson 1968).

And though not agreeing with this position, Docherty (1986) described the opponents of his type of 'conventional' sex education as claiming that it debased moral values and was clearly not in the child's interest.

" There is a school of thought which sees childhood as a time of true sexlessness, innocent and carefree, which must be protected for as long as possible. It advocates censorship of sex education materials and tight control of teachers, because, it argues, conventional sex education starts too soon, debases traditional moral and family values, unhealthily emphasises the physical at the expense of the emotional and moral, and encourages immorality and promiscuity.

(Docherty 1986).

Woodring (1969) observed that parents are probably better placed than teachers to give the moral dimension to sex education but a moral dimension is being urged (Patten 1993; DfE 1994; Reiss 1995) but as yet, little mentioned in school statements (Blair and Furniss 1995).

The Clarity Collective (1986) said that sex education was not value-free:

" Sex education is not, and cannot be, value free, but you can be aware of your values and lessen the chance of imposing your biases on the people with whom you work."

(C.C. 1989).

The exploration of values and attitudes is seen as an integral aspect of sex education by some educators (Greene 1994; DfE 1994; Ray and Went 1995; Bainham 1996).

" We are convinced that the planning and presentation of sex education should encompass the opportunity for exploration

of values and attitudes, and the growth of skills necessary to build relationships, communicate and make decisions. "
(C.C. 1989).

"a much broader interpretation of the term 'sex education' is appropriate.... the process of sex education could be properly extended to include an exploration of attitudes, values and feelings. It (the Working Party RF) also considered that other issues which are part of the experience of growing up in today's families could not be ignored..."
(N.C.W.G.B. 1989).

While Hyett (1935) saw 'real' sex education as an attitude towards life.

" The facts of reproduction are part of the knowledge which the normal child demands young, and if parents are still so unenlightened as to have withheld them, teachers must provide them. But this seems to be a very small part of sex education. The real sex education lies in an attitude towards life which consciously seeks the fullest expression, not only of the self but for all other selves in the community, and, because consciousness is focussed on the larger aims, leaves the unconscious free to find its fulfilment through the biological purposes of sex."
(Hyett 1935).

Gagern (1953) saw sex education as an integral part of ordinary education and suggested that it should not be special or separate from the rest of the curriculum. Woodring (1969) dubbed it 'not an academic discipline' and in doing so introduced an element of ambiguity. Harris (1974) considered the word 'education' in 'sex education' and said it must be judged as any other aspect of education not as 'instruction' only, nor as 'training', or 'indoctrinisation' but the inculcation of the 'maximum possible degree of knowledge and understanding concerning sexual behaviour'. On the one hand therefore:

" Sex education is a portion of general education and should not be regarded as a separate thing."
(Gagern 1953).

.....except that:

" Sex is not an academic discipline and only a Summerhill school could get away with a 'learning by doing' approach to even its most elementary aspects. The schools and colleges can and should continue to teach the facts and principles relating to sex that are part of biology, psychology, and sociology, but when they

venture into the moral issues we doubt that teachers are better qualified than parents."

(Woodring 1969).

If Woodring (1969) is placing sex education along side, say, woodwork, art and craft, and swimming, as examples of 'non-academic' subjects the practical teaching methods they would require are unlikely to be possible for sex education. Implicit in his remarks was the concept of 'learning by doing' as the best way to teach them. This had obvious problems for sex education since the encouragement of children's sexual activity was (and is) not generally found in our culture. His reference to Summerhill seemed misplaced, particularly as the sleeping arrangements in Summerhill were strictly segregated (Neill 1968).

Woodring (1969) went on to say that the biological, psychological and sociological aspects of sex should be taught in schools but not the moral. Children's moral development was very much a part of the curriculum. The rambling muddled message given in Woodring (1969) might foreshadow the kind of muddled thinking some heads have towards sex education and could give insights into the kind of problems which generate negative influences on sex education decision-making.

Harris' (1974) attempt to argue some kind of educational merit for sex education was poorly put. He made no judgment on whether sex education was properly part of the main curriculum or not. One must judge for oneself and if what is being called sex education fails to provide '...the maximum possible degree of knowledge and understanding concerning sexual behaviour.' then it could not be called 'education'. Not the clearest of arguments:

" In the first place I want to take the word 'education' seriously. Education is not identical with such processes as instruction, training or indoctrinisation. It is not just the teaching of facts, or the imparting of skills. It is quite incompatible with such an aim as making people behave in a certain way. Education aims at initiating people into worthwhile activities concerned with learning and understanding. Sex education, therefore, cannot (logically) be only the giving of certain facts, or only training in relevant skills (whatever those might be). Nor can it involve imposing a particular attitude toward 'sexual morality'. What it must achieve, if it is to be judged by the same criteria as other areas of education, is the maximum possible degree of knowledge and understanding concerning sexual behaviour."

(Harris 1974).

The dilemma for heads considering introducing sex education or of developing it further in their schools is not helped by the concept that it is not a subject. Confusion arises over the question which would therefore follow, namely, '...what is it then?'. According to the examples below, it is variously: 'an openness of attitude'; 'way of life....attitude of mind'; 'function of the entire curriculum'.

So vague are these descriptions they are virtually useless other than demonstrating the kind of non-threatening generalities with which sex education is surrounded. How is sex education a way of life?..... a function of the entire curriculum? How is it these general claims are not made for maths, history, or cricket, and so on? Possibly because they are not emotive subjects, are not taboo, do not form a central topic of society's double standards

But the dilemma remains, sex education is not a subject, nor was it clearly anything else:

" Sex education is not a 'subject' and should not be a professional obligation. Schools should develop an openness of attitude to allow children to ask questions in their own time and way - relate sex knowledge to its context in marriage and

family life.....and to prepare a future generation of parents to act responsibly when they grow up."

(C.E.B.E. 1964).

" Sex education is not a subject, it is a way of life, an attitude of mind".

(Hierons 1972).

" Sex education can never be a 'subject' on the timetable, taught by experts..... it should be obvious that sex education is a function of the entire curriculum."

(Harris 1974).

Currently it is seen as a topic in its own right and a cross-curriculum theme (N.C.C. 1990a; DfE 1994).

The claim that we do not have to learn about sex as it is inherent or a natural activity is false. Somehow we all learn about sex. What and how we learn depends on a range of factors. Learning in school provides a corrective to learning from the street or peer group and because parents generally fail to teach their children. Not all heads agree that sex is a topic about which children should, can, or need to learn but sex can be taught and through the teaching, children increase their knowledge and understanding and do in fact, learn (Fidge 1988).

Hemming (1971) viewed teaching and thereby, learning about sex as imperative:

" According to whether the sexual component in human personality is properly educated, left stultified, or distorted, it will exert a profound positive or negative influence upon the confidence, integration and capacity for happiness of the adult personality. To expect sexual maturity in the nation's adults without educating to attain it is as pointless as supposing that skilled mathematicians will grow on trees."

(Hemming 1971).

Rogers (1972; 1974) saw sex education as meaningful only in terms of the education element which implied learning.

" The concept of sex education is meaningful because human sexual behaviour (unlike that of some lower organisms) is a learned phenomenon for all its hormonal correlates. All men therefore are sex educated by their environment, but what they learn..... depends on the kind of society they grow up in."

(Rogers 1972).

" A concern with sex education must stem from the recognition that human socio-sexual development is a learning process."

(Rogers 1974).

Sex education is a learning process (Went 1989; Brook 1997) affecting all aspects of children's sexual development.

Sex education also has some very public, negative descriptions attached to it. These tend to be public as they often come from groups who either oppose sex education or seriously disagree with the way mainstream sex education is being purveyed. They often come from the Moral Right of society and are sometimes connected with some kind of religious group or the far right of the political spectrum(Pickering 1971; Tingle 1986; Engel 1987; Sattler 1991; P.C.F.1996; Haywood 1996). Because of the public nature of much of this comment it can be both alarmist and persuasive and as such could exercise influence on those who might be asked to consider the implementation of sex education in the junior curriculum.

Opponents of current sex education say that it should not occur (Reiss 1995) starts too soon, debases traditional moral and family values, unhealthily emphasises the physical at the expense of the emotional and moral, and encourages immorality and promiscuity (Docherty 1986; Anchell 1995; F.Y.C. 1997).

In general warning terms, Lorand (1970), and Eysenck and Nias (1978) said that sex education was destructive and dangerous or potentially so:

- " They (Sex education programmes RF) overwhelm the child with concepts beyond his ability to comprehend, undermine parental authority, invade family privacy, disturb the development phases and borrow concepts from psychotherapy which are extremely dangerous for classroom use."

(Lorand 1970).

- " Sex education....is potentially dangerous...little is in fact known about the advantages and the dangers of sex education."

(Eysenck and Nias 1978).

The outcomes were likely to be tragic (Drake 1968) destroy the family (R.S. 1982) and erode human values (Riches 1986):

- " Only tragedy can result (when schools use sex education programmes RF), as demonstrated in Sweden, where sex education has been in effect for ten years. It has resulted in sexual hysteria and disease among the youth of that country."

(Drake 1968).

- " The declared aim of the front runners of this lobby (dedicated liberal sex educators RF) is to work towards a society in which 'archaic sex laws...are non-existent': those laws which help to preserve the family as the basic unit of society and lay the foundation for civilised sexual standards."

(R.S. 1982).

- " ...children should be protected from exposure to types of sex education which are amoral in content and whose purpose is to erode human values which have evolved over thousands of years."

(Riches 1986)

Liberal sex instruction would not maintain health (Windeyer 1982) served the interests of contraceptive firms (R,S. 1982) and was fraudulent (Szasz 1981).

- " It is unlikely that there would be any disagreement about the importance and the necessity of instruction in the basic scientific facts of sexual anatomy and physiology and of reproduction. Sex education has, however, been put forward as an aspect of health education and it would appear that some of the instruction proposed by advocates of more liberal sexual instruction may indeed have an exactly opposite effect to the maintenance of health."

(Windeyer 1982).

- " Sex education has also become the vehicle by which commercial interests seek to 'widen the market for contraceptives'."

(R.S. 1982).

"sex education, as presently practised, is a mass of misinformation, misrepresentation, and outright fraud. The term 'sex education' conceals far more than it reveals." (Szasz 1981).

Sex education is fraught with controversial issues (Green 1994; Trudell 1995; Reiss 1995) not least of which is the appropriateness of much of the sexual information for children in the junior school (Anchell 1995; F.Y.C. 1997/8). Major problems related to population control, homosexuality, AIDS, pre-marital conduct, public morality, multi-cultural matters, and the like, pose genuine problems for schools whether sex educating or not.

Sex education has been variously seen as: a secret between mummies and children; a do-it-yourself activity; saying 'no'; NOT the 'bag of publicity tricks' (i.e. health education RF); lessons in plumbing; caught not taught. While these may be regarded by some as either light-hearted, or jocular, they do reflect a perception of sex education, which is likely to influence a person's feelings about the subject, and subsequently, their action. These brief descriptions represent the examples above:

" 'I'm glad it's that way babies come,' said Peter. ' It makes us really belong to you more doesn't it ?..... Why didn't you tell us Mother ?'

' I really don't know,' said Mrs. Ray, 'I suppose I thought you were too young, though I believe you would have understood all right. I think that one reason was that when you're very little you talk about things any time without thinking whether you should or not. And, you see, people don't generally talk about this. Now that you know, I'd like you to look on it as a sort of secret between mothers and their children, not meant for other people. Will you ?'

(Beech 1928).

Sex education is best learnt as a do-it-yourself activity. (Johnson 1968).

" Some people seem to think that just teaching children to say the letters ' N. O.' is all the sex education that is needed." (Beaumont 1976).

(see also: Kantor 1993).

" It is still necessary to explain and demonstrate what health education is, and particularly that it is NOT the 'bag of publicity tricks' that has plagued us through the years."
(Taylor 1977).

" Most of the sex education classes in our schools are programs in plumbing - a relentless pursuit of the Fallopian tubes."
(Gordon 1979).

" ...within our society, sex education is mostly left to chance learning - caught, more often than taught."
(C.C. 1989).

The completion of 'Sex education is.....' can be both positive and negative and ranges over so wide a set of definitions as to illustrate the difficulty in defining it. The examples in section 4.2 above are by no means exhaustive, but it seems certain that each definition reflects a particular attitude towards sex education.

4.3 WHAT HEADTEACHERS MEAN BY 'SEX EDUCATION' (1978)

What heads say is appropriate sex knowledge for children of 11 years could indicate what they think the content of primary sex education should be. Even heads opposed to sex education will have opinions on what items of sexual knowledge and conduct etc. are appropriate for primary children. Heads' views of what constitutes sex education could influence whether they are prepared to recommend it. This section aims to develop a statement describing the kind of sex education supported by a majority of heads based on their choices from a checklist of suggested items.

The statement in this section refers to the opinions of heads based on a checklist in a research project in 1978 (Fidge 1978b). Heads were asked to select from the checklist those items they would include in a primary sex education programme (or which they felt children should know about by

the age of 11). Items from the list approved by 50 % of the heads or more formed the basis of what was deemed appropriate for inclusion in primary school sex education. A statement was formulated to describe sex education based upon those items heads deemed appropriate knowledge for 11 year olds.

Details of the full checklist and methodology supporting this section are set out in Appendix 2.

The table 3. below, sets out those items which were considered appropriate:

ORDER OF SEX EDUCATION CONTENT CHOICES

ITEMS RECEIVING 50 % OR MORE RESPONSES

| HEADS' ONLY, SEX EDUCATION CONTENT CHOICE | | All TEACHERS' (INCLUDING HEADS) SEX EDUCATION CONTENT CHOICES. | |
|--|-----|---|----|
| % BIOLOGICAL AND PHYSIOLOGICAL | | | |
| a. Animal families | 100 | a. Animal families | 95 |
| b. Baby animals | 100 | b. Baby animals | 94 |
| c. Growth from seeds....plants | 100 | c. Growth from seeds....plants | 94 |
| d. Animal seeds....spawn etc. | 92 | d. Animal seeds....spawn etc. | 90 |
| e. Chicks, puppies, kittens etc. | 92 | e. Chicks, puppies, kittens etc. | 90 |
| f. Human babies develop in mother | 85 | f. Human babies develop in mother | 90 |
| g. Where they develop | 85 | g. Where they develop | 84 |
| k. Man & woman required for baby | 85 | h. Length of time inside mother | 82 |
| l. Simple fertilisation facts (sperm/egg) | 85 | j. Differences between boys/girls | 82 |
| h. Length of time inside mother | 77 | k. Man & woman required for baby | 80 |
| j. Differences between boys/girls | 77 | l. Simple fertilisation facts (sperm/egg) | 75 |
| (Continued over page) | | q. Preparation for changes in puberty | 66 |
| p. Simple heredity | 69 | p. Simple heredity | 57 |
| q. Preparation for changes in puberty | 69 | | |
| i. Birth details of human babies | 54 | | |
| m. Female reproductive organs, detail (vagina, uterus, ovaries, ovum) | 54 | | |
| n. Male reproductive organs, detail (penis, scrotum, testicles, sperm) | 54 | | |

(continued)

(continued)

| s. Specific preparation for puberty | | Specific preparation for puberty | |
|-------------------------------------|----|----------------------------------|----|
| BOYS | | BOYS | |
| Voice breaks | 54 | Become stronger | 62 |
| Pubic hair/beard | 54 | Voice breaks | 60 |
| | | Pubic hair/beard | 50 |
| GIRLS | | GIRLS | |
| Breasts develop | 62 | Breasts develop | 65 |
| Periods begin | 62 | Periods begin | 65 |
| Become more feminine | 54 | Become more feminine | 62 |
| Menstrual hygiene | 54 | Menstrual hygiene | 58 |
| Pubic hair | 54 | Pubic hair | 57 |

MORAL AND ETHICAL

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|----|
| a. Self discipline | 85 | b. Human affection | 82 |
| b. Human affection | 85 | e. Awareness of others' feelings | 78 |
| e. Awareness of others' feelings | 85 | a. Self discipline | 77 |
| i. Importance of the family | 85 | i. Importance of the family | 76 |
| m. Advice regarding child molesters | 82 | c. Tenderness | 68 |
| c. Tenderness | 77 | m. Advice regarding child molesters | 60 |
| h. God's role in Creation | 69 | | |
| l. Honesty in personal relations | 62 | | |
| g. Importance of marriage | 54 | | |
| q. Notion of giving & commitment | 54 | | |

Table 3. Items selected by 50% or more of a group of primary headteachers as suitable for inclusion in a primary sex education programme or as appropriate knowledge for 11 year olds.

A description of what sex education would include, based on the majority responses of head teachers, listed in Table 3. could be summarised:

STATEMENT

The majority of heads perceive sex education in the junior school to comprise the following body of knowledge:

All living things in nature, reproduce themselves.

Just like animals, plants and flowers, humans also reproduce. Human babies develop in their mothers for nine months, before they are born. Babies are born through the vagina which can stretch to enable birth to occur. Human babies are started when a sperm cell from the father joins an egg cell inside the mother, and as they come from their mothers' and

fathers', seeds (cells) characteristics and other family aspects are passed on from one generation to another.

They should know of the physical differences between boys and girls which are important for the purposes of reproduction, when they grow up. Children need to know and recognise details of adult sexual organs and their functions. General preparation for puberty with some details about menstruation and physical growth is necessary, but this does not include reference to any tentative sexual behaviour, nor details of the spermarche, nor aspects of sex-related social behaviour.

Human feelings of love, tenderness and caring are included, together with concepts of honesty and responsibility in relationships within marriage. The family is seen as important, together with concepts of God's wider creative force.

Advice on keeping safe is possibly included.

4.4 WHAT HEADS MEAN BY 'SEX EDUCATION' (1988)

The 1978 checklist was revised to provide the basis for an update of the earlier description of what heads meant by sex education (Fidge 1978b).

This revised checklist was re-presented to a different set of heads (Fidge 1988a) to develop a second statement of what heads meant by 'sex education. Full details of the 1988 survey are given in Appendix 2.

Several hypotheses were advanced regarding a head's opinion of appropriate sex education content for junior aged children:

1. The stronger the support heads had for sex education, the more items they would include from the checklist.
2. Heads proposing to undertake sex education would include more items than those who did not support sex education, but fewer than those who have already introduced it.
3. Heads, not in favour of school-based sex education would have fewer content items than those in the other two categories.
4. Non sex-educating heads would include some items of content which could carry shock or warning messages.
5. Heads with sex education already on the curriculum would tend to be less supportive of 'nature/birds and bees' items than others.

There was support for hypotheses 1, 2 and 3, evidence of some support for

hypothesis 5 and slight support for hypothesis 4.

REVISED CHECKLIST

This is detailed in Appendix 2 (section 2.5). The issue of child abuse had been partly covered in the 1978 version by a reference to child molesting. Schools have generally found it easy to warn children of 'stranger danger' and in 1978 that seemed to cover the situation. Public concern of abuse within the family or by friends or relatives is an issue which is still not adequately addressed by most schools. It is still seen in terms of molesting children so the original words in the checklist were carried over but their interpretation and focus might now be different. AIDS was an issue not evident earlier that was included. Prostitution and pornography (particularly with some young children's experience of 'blue' videos) seemed two further items which some people consider appropriate for discussion by junior-aged children.

Table 4. Items which received a response rate of 50% or more from the heads for inclusion in a primary sex education programme.

| RANK ORDER OF RESPONSES | |
|--|------------|
| FACTS: | % RESPONSE |
| a. Animal families / Baby animals | 82 |
| b. Growth from seeds / plants | |
| e. Human babies develop in mother | |
| f. Where they develop | |
| g. Gestation time (humans / animals) | |
| h. Birth details of humans | |
| i. Physical differences boys / girls | 73 |
| c. Animal seeds (spawn, eggs etc.) | |
| d. Chicks, puppies, foals etc. | |
| k. Fertilisation facts (sperm and egg) | |
| j. Man and woman make a baby | 64 |
| o. General preparation for puberty | |
| Specific preparation for puberty | |

(continued)

| | |
|--|-------------|
| p. 8. Breasts develop | (continued) |
| p.10. Periods begin | |
| 1. Become stronger (boys) | 55 |
| 2. Voice breaks | |
| 3. Pubic hairs / beard | |
| 9. Pubic hairs (girls) | |
| p.11. Menstrual hygiene | |
| l. Female reproductive organs, detail (vagina, uterus, ovaries, etc.) | |
| m. Male reproductive organs, detail (penis, scrotum, testicles, etc.) | |
| q. Explanation of simple heredity | |
| n. Explanation of normal intercourse | |
| p. 7. More feminine | |
| p. 4. Produce sperm (boys) | |

CONCEPTS

| | |
|---|----|
| b. Understanding human affection | 64 |
| e. Awareness of others' feelings | |
| m. Advice re. child molesters | |
| o. Discussion regarding 'Going with strangers / dirty old men' | 55 |
| c. Tenderness, love, caring | |
| g. Importance of marriage | |
| i. Importance of the family | |
| t. Family responsibilities | |
| a. Notion of self discipline | |
| f. Boyfriends / girlfriends | |
| h. God's role in Creation | |

From the above list the items which form a basis for the definition fall into 6 sub groups:

1. The baby-making process.
2. Physiological differences.
3. The family and personal development.
4. Puberty.
5. Keeping safe.
6. The Creative force and Nature.

To expand these sub groups into aims for junior sex education the following would apply:

1. To provide an explanation of the reproductive process in humans.
2. To prepare children for the changes they will experience as they enter puberty.
3. To inform children of the physiological differences between the sexes (both children and adults), and the reasons for this.
4. To provide discussion and investigation of the concepts regarding

- the family; marriage; personal relationships and responsibilities
5. To provide information and discussion for children to develop ways of keeping themselves safe in different circumstances.
 6. To learn about ways in which other living organisms reproduce, and to consider the ideas of a greater creative force, which is variously thought of as Nature or God.

The definition of sex education below is one which would be acceptable to the majority of heads and provide minimum sex education content for children by the end of the junior school. To formulate a definition which gains wide approval, for the introduction of sex education at that level, would provide a basis for further developmental work. Many heads would include more.

STATEMENT

Junior sex education provides information to answer these questions: Where do babies come from? How did they get there? What goes to make a baby? How long does it take to develop? How is it born? Why does it look like its parents?

It offers a simple explanation for the physical differences between the sexes, and the reasons for these.

It aims to explain the process of growing up and to prepare children for puberty. Children will learn that: Girls become more feminine; their breasts develop; they will start their periods and learn how to cope with them. Boys get stronger; their voices break; they start to shave and begin to produce sperm. Both boys and girls develop pubic hair.

They will learn of the importance of marriage and the family with the implications of love, care, responsibility, affection. They will learn about human relationships and friendships and the need for self discipline and consideration for others.

They will learn some ways of keeping themselves safe in certain circumstances.

They will learn that animals and plants also reproduce.

Children will be introduced to the idea of a larger creative force, understood by many as God/Nature.

.....

The wide divergance of what individual heads mean by sex education could have some bearing on whether they are prepared to implement it. Published

material and schemes of work, have a wider range of content items than those reflected by the plus 50% response levels of both definitions above (Fidge 1978b; 1988a). Once items from the minus 50% level begin to be included some heads may become increasingly reluctant to be involved.

The fact that the animal/plant items have lower rankings than ten years ago suggests that they are emphasised less and heads are beginning to focus more on human behaviour and development in primary sex education.

Considering the current problems: H.I.V./AIDS; the need to practice safe sex; population and conservation issues; teenage sexual behaviour; teenage and pre-marital pregnancies; more openness to gayness; one parent families; the need for greater responsibility and honesty in personal relationships, and so on, it is perplexing to see that general agreement to sex education topics holds up only at a relatively uncontentious level.

One can see the difficulties which could arise in promoting sex education among those heads who are uncomfortable to include controversial items.

The content of a sex education scheme related to the attitudes of those who might be asked to deliver it, could constitute factors of influence which act negatively on its implementation.

4.5 INFLUENCE OF CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS ON CONTENT

The content of school-based sex education will depend on many factors; the school's/governors' policy; the scheme of work or curriculum guidelines; the teacher who is conducting the lessons; the printed materials used; the television programmes, other visual aids and computer software used; any

parent/community influence; the children's influence etc. Statements prefixed by 'Sex education is....' are not always going to give an indication of the content, but are often an expression of an opinion or attitude towards sex education.' Sex education content issues are part of the network of factors which variously influence heads' decisions whether or not to include sex education in their schools. In the following sections, consideration is given to these issues and the reasons why they might affect heads' decisions.

Much of the subject matter of the questions children ask or topics they want to discuss is not included in the heads' list of items which received more than 50% support for inclusion in primary sex education (see Table 4 above). For some heads that might be problematic and create concern or anxiety and reluctance concerning sex education. Some topics would be regarded as controversial or surprising by those adults who are unaware of the considerable knowledge primary-aged children have (Goldman and Goldman 1988; Collyer 1995). The subjects and style of children's questions quoted in the literature show that many areas of knowledge have been commonly sought for decades.

Bibby (1944) devoted a whole chapter (pp. 139 - 194) to the matter of pupils' questions. He illustrated a variety of questions which range widely through the spectrum of sex knowledge. These included: what use are boys' nipples ?, sterility, venereal disease, masturbation, sexual intercourse while pregnant, intercourse positions, how long does having sex take ?, seminal emissions, does sex hurt ?, does birth hurt ?, premature and still births, effect of VD the on unborn child, virginity, adultery,

prostitution, contraception, and so on.

Dawe (in Chessser and Dawe 1945) lists children's questions which include: prostitution, 'french letters', 'illegal operations' (abortions RF), venereal disease, and birth control, but she advises the encouragement of written questions:

"....in this way both teacher and class can be protected from such shock as may be occasioned by oral questions...."

Dawe (in Chessser and Dawe 1945) goes on to advise that all questions must be answered frankly, and that protection from shock is an important consideration, as the teacher's demeanour is essential for sound sex education:

" One must brace oneself and remember that the more 'shocking' the question the greater is the need for the matter to be brought out into the light, for the query to be correctly answered.... A further value of question-time is that it provides an opportunity to deal with aspects of sex knowledge that are not covered by the course."

Dawe (in Chessser and Dawe 1945).

Chanter (1966), reported children's questions about venereal disease, 'Durex', test tube babies, different intercourse positions, miscarriage and abortion, in addition to the 'normal' range addressed by the 'basic list'.

Kenner (1969) reports a wide variety of children's questions which included the following: starting to wear a bra', using 'Tampax', circumcision, erections and their duration, wet dreams, does it hurt to have sex ?, pre-marital sex, miscarriage, breech births, physical handicap and infertility.

Experience from some of the BBC follow-up work in the early 1970s, shows a bombarding of questions from children.

" The accumulated evidence shows that the programmes gave rise

to discussion which was free, sensible and uninhibited....
The range of topics covered the whole field from simple biology to morals. The children asked questions on every imaginable aspect with complete frankness."

(S.B.C. 1971).

Some of the questions were 'fact-finding' but others were identified as 'linguistic' - directed at getting clear meanings of words they had heard (S.B.C. 1971). Included in this linguistic grouping were topics such as 'siamese twins, multiple births, mongols, thalidomide babies (current in the 1970s RF) and caesarian operations'. Also reported were questions on pre-marital sex, illegitimacy, as well as questions about Adam and Eve and the Virgin Birth. Some discussion of 'rude' words was also reported and this area could lead to matters which were also outside, what might be called the 'basic list' above.

The influence of the teacher in generating (or stifling) discussion is a factor which has been recognised:

" There is no doubt that the fluency and quality of the discussion periods following the programmes depended to a large extent on therelationship established between teacher, children and parents."

(S.B.C. 1971).

Further topics of 'privacy during birth, nudity, and pain' were also evident as children's discussions developed (S.B.C. 1971). In the same study one teacher reported children's knowledge of abortion and contraception which she said she would not have expected.

Jones (1977) says that young people are often worried about many sex matters and value the opportunity to ask questions on: VD, the pill and 'Durex', homosexuality and perversions. Following her listings of many different questions asked, Jones (1977) suggests that some adults might be

shocked that such questions are asked at all, and they may even query whether children should be allowed to ask.

Asked what kind of sex information children (aged 11+ years) would most like to know, Fidge (1978a) found the subject matter included such topics as; the cost of 'Durex', the meaning of orgasm, sex changes, and specific questions of fact. Some of the questions included were: What is the youngest age for sex? What age can you start? Is it fun? Why can't you watch real people have sex? Why are people so secretive about sex? Is it dangerous for sex between the ages of 12 and 16? How do you masturbate? Is masturbation wrong? How do you kiss properly?

Students in grade 3 (9yrs old), indicated a strong desire for more sex information, and much of this is likely to be identified through their questions (Yarber 1979), a finding that supported earlier similar findings by S.I.E.C.U.S. (1971) and Byler, Lewis and Totman (1969).

Goldman and Goldman (1982) found that as primary children got older, they appeared more reluctant to ask teachers about sex. At 5 years, 52% said they would, at 7 years it was 43%, by 9 years this was down to 33% and at 11 years it was 28%. In the 13 years and 15 years range it remained at 33% and the research seemed to show a reluctance from older children on account of the fact that the major doubt was whether teachers could be trusted not to gossip or joke about children to other teachers in school if they asked sex questions.

In their investigation into the content and subject matter of children's

sexual thinking Goldman and Goldman (1982) included consideration of children's understanding of topics such as; stripping, rape; venereal disease, virginity, abortion and contraception. Topics such as nudity, whether children should receive sex knowledge/education, pre-marital and courting behaviour, purposes of coitus other than procreation, growth and ageing, family life and socio-sexual issues were considered too.

Went (1985) touched on some of the questions from children which teachers might expect. They included topics such as; induced and caesarian birth, erections, sexual intercourse during menstrual periods, causes and cures of VD, living together, vibrators, sex between brothers and sisters. Does sex hurt ? How do you know when to stop ? How many times each night ? What is contraception ? Can you be too young to get pregnant ?

These are some of the questions which Hughes (1988) listed as typical of those which children asked about sex and family life. How can she have a baby without being married ? What is rape? What is a homosexual ? What is a prostitute ? What is a brothel ? What is an abortion ? What is a flasher ? What is Aids ? How do you get Aids ? Why do parents have children in the first place if they are only going to abuse them ? Will I ever see my first mum ? Why haven't I got a daddy ? Why won't you have daddy back ?

Fidge (1988) found questions about homosexuality, contraception, abortion, sterilisation, rape, prostitution etc. were commonly asked in class.

Collyer (1995) details children's conversation on sex matters which

include; sexual intercourse, circumcision, condoms, abortion, emotional aspects of sex, relationships and so on. Collyer (1995) also remarks:

" There is a possibility that children, in talking openly about sex, may speak of things which adults do not want to hear. A child may talk about an aspect of sexual behaviour which causes.. some embarrassment. However, a child may make a disclosure of sexual abuse when s/he hears other children talking quite frankly about intercourse in a safe environment."

Dawe (in Chesser and Dawe 1945) referred to the possible shock teachers might experience at realising the extent of children's questions, and the need to guard against showing anxiety, as it would hinder effective sex education. Fidge (1978a) found some hint that children might be unwilling to ask questions as it was not considered to be the teacher's business. The unwillingness shown by children as they got older to ask teachers questions was suggested by Goldman and Goldman (1982) to reflect a lack of trust from older children. Difficulties in communication between children and teachers may also have something to do with the teacher's anxiety or embarrassment (Gammage 1989; Haywood 1996) particularly as it seems probable that a great deal of children's subject matter will be well outside the bounds of the generally acceptable range of the 'basic list'. A further possible explanation lies in the fact that children quickly perceive reticence or embarrassment and do not ask questions of adults from whom they perceive an unwillingness to answer, or who will either 'not hear' the question or fob it off.

In spite of official support for sex education, the inclusion of basic elements through the National Curriculum (Science) and the need to address issues of abuse, Aids, teenage pregnancies etc., some teachers still shy away from sex education and find it embarrassing (N.C.B. 1992; Trippe

1994). Part of the reason for this shyness and anxiety is because of the need to deal with controversial matters (N.C.B. 1992). Because of the range of children's interest and their search for the kind of information which many heads would see as controversial or inappropriate, it seems probable that influence on sex education generated by children's questions could be a factor which would affect sex education decision-making.

4.6 COMMENTS ON SEX EDUCATION CONTENT

In the previous section it was suggested that the questions children ask and the type of information they seek will tend to influence the topics covered in a sex education programme. Initially the topics referred to in children's questions/enquiries may not have been envisaged by those setting up a programme but once embarked upon, the natural enhancement of the children's input will increase the scope of it. Similarly the influence of some fairly generalised comments about sex education and its content by educationalists and others could have the same kind of effect. This section considers those generalised comments and observations about the content of sex education, with some reference to those suggestions for items which range beyond those set out in the 'basic list'.

Johnson (1979) identified some of the major concerns for health education, among which were some concerning sex education. A general and very serious problem, for both health and sex education was that the messages delivered were often very negative and that many of the inhibitions in health education related to the sex education aspects of it.

The problems created by the fact that health education is a low status, non

examinable subject, tend to allow for very wide content decisions which vary considerably from school to school. Subjects which are not part of the National Curriculum or public examination system are often perceived as unimportant. The situation regarding sex education content therefore is likely to remain problematic.

The idea that a lot of health and sex education occurs by way of the transmission of values, concepts and attitudes, through the school's hidden curriculum (Tomes 1987; Wetton and Moon 1987) does not constitute a recognised way of imparting sex education and led Johnson (1979) to observe that:

" The trouble with the hidden curriculum is that it's too damned well hidden."

Health areas identified during the conference (Johnson 1979) which participants said were capable of presenting problems and which were often found in the sex education curriculum included; social responsibility, sexual behaviour, learning sex roles, understanding parenting roles and responsibilities, personal relationships, understanding oneself, keeping safe from danger, concepts of self determination, and the influence of drugs and alcohol in regard to sexual matters (Johnson 1979).

Reference to the natural world of plant and animal life, what might be called the 'birds and bees' approach, has long been regarded as a useful way of putting some sex education concepts across or at least introducing them (Webb 1913; Beech 1928, Chesser and Dawe 1945, Tame 1960, Clarkson 1976). The B.B.C (1971) used this ploy in their original production of the three sex education films which they showed in their 'Merry-Go-Round'

series (but has since been removed in later revisions). The difficulties such an approach introduced were recognised earlier and what was so hard to get across was:

"...the personal application of the facts presented (from the botanical class RF). If that application is shirked the value of the lesson will in many cases be lost. The boy will learn some interesting botanical laws but will not connect them with human beings until he is a good deal older."
(Lyttelton 1900).

Brewer (1962) concluded that the 'birds and bees' approach could be very confusing to children. This concept is found less in recent sex education schemes but heads rated 'birds and bees' topics in top place for items to include in sex education in the late 1970s (Fidge 1978b). Although these topics were still favoured by heads as worthy of inclusion in sex education a decade later (Fidge 1988), they were placed in a lower ranking. That these topics appear to remain popular, yet are rarely found in recent material for sex education could create problems for some heads and may support the idea that some still need some kind of 'softener' or 'packing' to make sex education more 'acceptable'.

Controversial ideas have been proposed for some while. Gagern (1953) suggested that information about VD should be dealt with in the primary school. Hooker (1965) advocated preventative methods for homosexuality by means of open discussion and more sex education to enable homosexuals subsequently to understand themselves, and the community free itself from punitive attitudes. A more positive and non judgemental approach is now put forward (Docherty 1986).

The need to address sexual morality, and moral issues (DfE 1994; Reiss 1995) as well as the facts of life was one of the recommendations of the Church of England Board of Education (1964) though the Board added that the moral element must not be negative, prohibitive or given to self-interest but positive and concerned with the fulness of life (C.E.B.E. 1964).

Social/moral issues embodied in concepts like; have a good time as life is short, honesty never pays, decide for yourself what's right and wrong, have a good time before you're tied down in marriage, all homosexuals should be severely punished, and so on, were reportedly already beginning to exercise the minds of 11 - 14 year olds, and the opinions expressed in some cases might be said to run counter to what teachers might think, or teach (Harris 1968). Teachers were advised to be careful not to avoid dealing with the ethical aspects of sex (C.A.C.E. 1967).

The need to consider issues beyond the range of biological and personal hygiene matters was emphasised in the study on sex education undertaken in Birmingham prior to the publication of the Authority's recommendations (Birmingham 1967).

In the late 1960s, Kirkendall and Miles (1968) referred to a growing body of research showing that sex education was being extended to include sex role expectations and behaviour, and the growing concern that sex should be considered in relation to interpersonal relationships. The recent developments of sex teaching within the context of interpersonal relationships and self esteem/positive personal growth, continues the

trend, to take it beyond the facts of life image (C.C. 1989, Sanders and Swinden 1990; Ray and Went 1995)).

Addressing and preparing for pubertal change is accepted as a major reason for and aim of primary sex education and learning about and anticipating, adult roles. Havighurst (1972), provided a list of eight 'Development Tasks of Adolescence' some of which are appropriate for inclusion in junior sex education. In some cases consideration of some aspects of the Tasks is by means of preparatory work at the junior stage. Given that proviso, the following would seem appropriate for junior sex education:

- " a. Achieving new and more mature relations with age mates of both sexes.
 - b. Achieving a masculine or feminine role.
 - c. Accepting one's physique and using the body effectively.
 - e. Preparing for marriage, for long-term relationships and for family life.
 - h. Desiring and achieving socially responsible behaviour."
- (Havighurst 1972).

It had been suggested that content should be agreed with the parents (Clifford 1976; D.E.S. 1987; DfE 1994; Collyer 1995; Scott 1996) and Yarber (1979) suggested surveys of parents by schools to see just what might be implemented in terms of parental acceptance in order to reduce possible conflict to a minimum. Consultation with parents as part of the implementation process is discussed elsewhere in this work and while that need not necessarily imply parental agreement to content, or parental involvement in deciding content, it is likely to establish some kind of parental influence on content. It is probable that parental views on content will be even less 'radical' than heads' (Fidge 1978) and this could introduce a further content-related Factor of Influence (see also Collyer 1995; H.P.A.N.I. 1996).

Concepts of the pleasure and desirability of parenthood as being both a benefit to the individual as well as a beneficial responsibility to the nation were suggested for inclusion by Peel (1967). The optimum time for this he suggested was just after puberty. Parenting skills are also seen by others as an essential part of sex education (e.g. Gordon 1979; Morgan 1994; de Burgh and Whelan 1996; O.N.S. 1997; C.G.F/C.S. 1997).

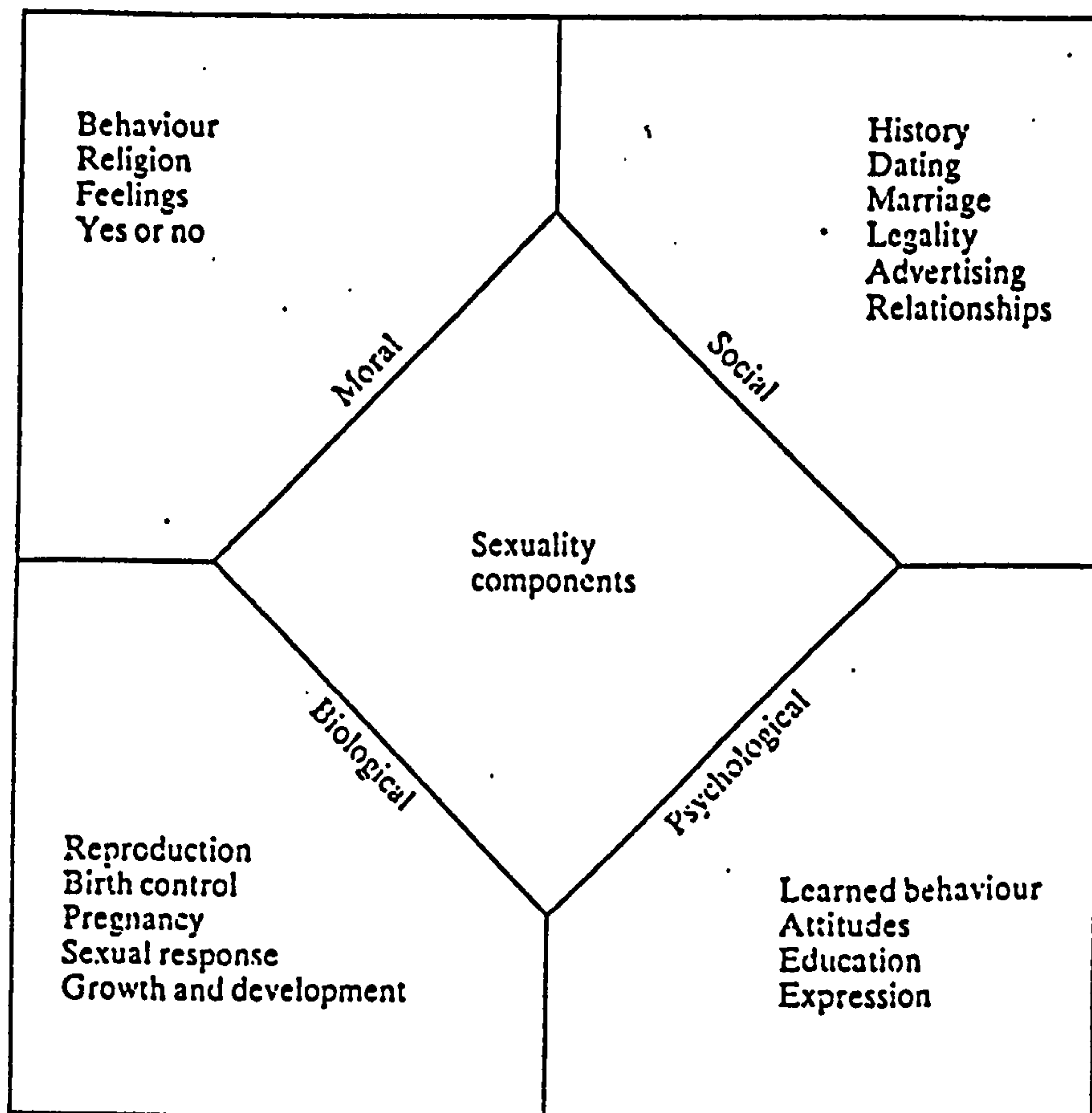
Many sex programmes include 'getting old' and 'dying' as part of the concepts of growth but Goldman and Goldman (1982) observed that no sex education programmes included mention of sexual activity for elderly people. The notion was often conveyed that for women, the menopause spelt the end of sexual activity, and the cessation of sexual activity for men was a vague unmentionable. It could be deduced from the Goldmans' comments that this area of human sexuality should be considered.

Up to about the age of 9 children have perceived human sexuality in terms of love - family - baby making but from between 9 - 13 children become much more aware of the 'sex is fun' images from the mass media (Went 1985). Help in considering the notion of 'sex is fun' will need to be given if children are to develop a healthy responsibility to sex.

In suggesting content for the 9 - 13 curriculum, Went (1985) included; the range of human sexuality (including homosexuality), boys' and girl's masturbation, wet dreams, anti-social sexual behaviour, gender roles and dual standards, contraception, age of consent, abortion, STDs, knowledge of health care services, and so on.

The use of check lists for breaking down learning into sequential parts and thereby informing teachers' decisions regarding the introduction of content items, is regarded as an important strategy for sex education (Bender, Valletutti and Bender 1976; Cabon and Scott 1980; Rectory Paddock School 19819; Craft 1983).

Bruess and Greenberg (1981) suggested that an appropriate way of viewing human sexuality was to represent it as a framework of four interrelated components; moral, biological, psychological and social:



At any point in a person's sexual development something of each of these four interrelated components will be interacting with the others and so

this complex interaction of component parts will require comprehensive awareness, understanding and planning to provide children with appropriate balance in their sexual education.

In identifying the main content areas of health education, Williams (1987a) listed one as 'Growth and development' and gave one of the components of that area as 'Emotional and social development accompanying physical change'. This is particularly so in the case of pubertal change and the need to include emotional and social aspects of sexual development in schemes for primary aged pupils would seem obvious. Finding reasons why some topics are included in sex education and not others could be more mundane than expected. The Clarity Collective ((1990) suggested:

" Reasons for including some topics and not others may be lack of time, insufficient knowledge and resources, group interests or agency policy. However, you may find yourself say that 'the group isn't ready yet', when in fact it may be your own unrecognised feelings of inadequacy and discomfort. You need to acknowledge your feelings, accept them, and work towards feeling more comfortable with the topic."

(Clarity Collective 1989).

One hypothesis of this study is that some heads have strong personal feelings for not promoting sex education, feelings of discomfort, inadequacy, embarrassment and a reluctance to deal with sex matters, but these reasons are often hidden or screened by other more 'educationally acceptable' ones. The difficulty is showing that to be true. Clarity Collective (1990), suggest this as a possible reason for avoidance, or the avoidance of certain topic areas, due to 'unrecognised' feelings, but the question of just how 'unrecognised' these feelings are, needs to be put.

A theoretical and philosophical framework is essential for any sex education programme, and a format for designing such a framework is proposed in Clarity Collective (1990).

Provision for addressing issues, such as, raising levels of self-esteem, challenging sexist assumptions, recognising both heterosexual and homosexual needs, consideration of the nature of and expression of sexuality, needs to be made, and the concept of the framework suggested by the Clarity Collective (1990) is flexible enough to accommodate different aspects for which planning will need to be made

An alternative planning method is suggested by Sanders and Swinden (1990) in order to establish a whole school policy for sex education. They suggest brainstorming as a good way of developing a policy which has contributions from the whole school staff. In their example of the kind of outcomes which might be expected they have included topics such as; self-respect and confidence, appropriate ways of exploring feelings, sexually transmitted diseases, contraception, power, peer group pressure, pleasure/pain, de-mystifying the myths, assertion, and so on.

Recent work in sex education has broadened to consider the more affective aspects of sex, dealing with topics such as, feelings, communication, and relationships (Ray and Went 1995) but this is not always so.

" There is even less readiness to come to terms with the feelings, as opposed to the facts, of life, however. Formal sex education may be explicit enough about the pipes and the plumbing. It may even spell out *how* to do it. But does it deal sufficiently well with the strength of the urges that might make you want to do it? Or with the respect due to the partner who might not?"

(T.E.S. 1992).

" We would see sex and health education enabling children to discuss and maintain relationships, build the social skills needed to negotiate, make informed and assertive decisions, enabling children to take responsibility for their sexual behaviour and considering moral and ethical issues."

(Bennett 1992).

Strategies for developing sex education programmes from reviewing the existing arrangements, developing a values framework, involving parents, children, outside agencies, accounting for staff involvement and training, setting aims and objectives and agreed teaching methods, resulting in a whole-school policy to include wide-ranging 'controversial areas' in addition to those on the 'basic list' are currently being recommended (Lenderyou 1993; Collyer 1995; Ray and Went 1995).

Using the 'basic list' as a basis for the body of knowledge which would gain 50% popular support it can be seen that there has been a considerable lobby for many years of educationalists and others who have suggested topics which are not included in the list. The suggestions for subjects like contraception, the variety of human sexuality, STDs, and others which are seen as controversial are not recent manifestations of liberal sexuality, but have been regularly proposed for decades. It could be that controversial areas of sex information and sexual issues might make some heads reluctant to promote sex education and influence their decision-making.

4.7 SOME REASONS FOR SEX EDUCATION

Reasons for sex education from the literature which support the idea that sex education is essential and beneficial for children and society are summarised and considered in this section. The literature references are

listed in detail in Appendix 4. The reasons have been collated under the following headings: Personal Development - Physiological - Psychological - Knowledge - Conceptual - Peer Culture - Societal - Social - Pastoral / Family - Hidden. Equally they could have been considered under other wide ranging groupings such as: Communication - Values - Attitudes - Behaviour - Concepts - Developmental - Sex Roles - Relationships - Factual - Cultural etc. Similar concepts run through the the aims and outcomes of sex education.

Many areas of personal development are given as reasons for sex education. It will develop decision-making skills and the ability to form good judgements. It will help promote self esteem, self understanding, self respect and confidence, laying the foundation to a good character, and orderly personal development.

Sex education will develop sensible attitudes, and enable children to recognise and correct wrong attitudes. It will assist in preparing children for the physical changes of puberty, and help them cope with the growth of mind and body through adolescence to adulthood. As Hemming (1971a) said:

" Sex education in the pre-pubertal stage - say about 10 to 13 or 14 - is of tremendous significance. It is vitally important before puberty sets in, that the child should be clear and untroubled about the so-called 'facts of life' and that he or she sees them in the context of wonder, involvement and love."

(Hemming 1971a).

A knowledge of physical development in a non-repressive atmosphere is a reason for sex education so that children will learn about their bodies and how they work, which will encourage good hygiene habits and prepare

them for a healthy and happy sex life.

Part of children's development is seen in terms of improving necessary communication skills, to give a sound vocabulary for better and more accurate communication about sex matters and through communication the development of sound inter-personal relationships.

Attitudes of mind and the development of emotional growth are considered under the general term of psychological factors. Children are helped in their emotional and psychological development if they learn the facts of life, before becoming emotionally involved. Such anticipation and preparation for an understanding of their developing sexuality underpins their emotional and psychological development.

Sex education is a protective strategy, guarding against fear, anxiety, and ignorance, as well as giving information which would help children to be safer in potentially abusing situations or to cope better with the shock or trauma of actual abuse. Goldman and Goldman (1982) said that:

" The incidence of rape and child sexual molestation in Western societies, whether on the increase or not, involves more than the terror and trauma caused to the victims over a long period of time. There are indications of sexual immaturity and maladjustment on the part of offenders, in the case of rape, the majority are under 25 years of age, and in the case of child molestation are often members of the child's own family. This raises questions not so much of punishment but of prevention and remediation and the whole question of educating the young towards a wholesome, mature and healthy view of sex. Where victims are concerned, particularly children and adolescents, it raises questions of how they can be mentally as well as physically protected or prepared for such eventualities. How can a child of 10 who knows nothing of sexual intercourse, who has received no sex education, and who trusts most adults and members of his own family, be made aware and told what to do in such circumstances ?"

(Goldman and Goldman 1982).

Sex education corrects misinformation which all children absorb, as they grow up. Knowledge of the sex facts prevents or corrects the inaccurate explanations and myths which children are given or invent themselves as they try to make sense of the world around them.

The conceptual reasons for sex education, associated with the ways children regard physical, behavioural, attitudinal and social aspects of sexual development, include ideas of equality, openness, freedom, rights, truth, honesty and dignity. It enables the exploration of moral and ethical values and attitudes, reduces conflict and corrects misconceptions.

The consideration of the peer culture as a reason for sex education arises from two opposing ideas. The first that it is better for children to learn about sex in a wholesome and open way from a reliable and respected source, namely the parents or the school (youth group, church etc). There is a second reason which recognises that the peer group is known to be the most common source of sex information for children and they will always talk about sex matters with their friends, so that if this is to be a significant source of information, it should be the most accurate possible, ideally coming from reliable sex education from an early age.

Children ask for sex education and there is evidence from young people who did not have sex education or who regarded it as being either too little and/or too late, that they regretted not being given such education and urged its provision for those coming after them. Sex education enables children to handle peer pressure more easily and is thought prudent in view of the increased sexual activity of young people. Farrell (1978) reported:

"the possibility that over a third of all teenagers in the sample had had some sexual experience before the age of sixteen has important implications for sex educationists...."
(Farrell 1978).

A reason for sex education which benefits society, is the economic fact that it is cheaper to give sex education than to deal with the consequences of not giving it. Wayland (1970) placed considerable emphasis on social issues in stating reasons for sex education:

" The major factor has been changes in family structure in the highly urban, industrialised society. The emergence of the nuclear family, the generally long involvement of young people in education with the extended dependency on the family, the movement of women into employment out of the home, and the general shift toward equality of women has reduced the effectiveness of earlier forms of social control and required a new pattern of relationships within families. Great concern has been felt for the incidence of illegitimate birth among teenagers, or the marriages among teenagers occasioned by unwanted pregnancy. Concern has also been felt for the incidence of Venereal Disease among this age group."

(Wayland 1970).

The societal benefits of sex education include, the avoidance of teenage pregnancy and disease, to discourage promiscuity and irresponsible sexual behaviour, to enhance male/female relationships and to encourage social responsibility, an increase in safe sex and a reduction in the incidence of AIDS. The social reasons for sex education include the need to help children understand changing sex roles in our society, to protect children from the commercial and media pressures and to enable children to have a greater understanding of some of the major issues in society today, like abortion, sex crimes, population issues, and so on.

There are both positive and negative reasons for sex education which flow from issues related to parents and families. Probably the most substantial reason suggested for school-based sex education is that parents

fail to sex educate their children, either satisfactorily, or at all. Parents are in favour of school-based sex education and in some cases have been instrumental in bringing pressure to promote it in schools where it did not previously exist. Sex education provides the channel through which children can investigate the family, the changing family situations in today's society, the skills and difficulties of family life and development, the complexities of parenting skills, the issues of family planning and the problems arising from family and marital discord.

The reasons given for sex education are generally considered to be positive, enlightened, forward-looking, radical even. But this is not necessarily the case. Some contributors to the sex education debate have identified an element of covert repression of sexual activity, an attempt to warn of dire consequences and deter and the promotion of negative or inhibitive attitudes, forming a hidden agenda for some forms of sex education. Such 'reasons' could be said to form a link or mid-way position between the supporters of sex education and those who are opposed to it. Some sex education is promoted for reasons of social and political control.

The reasons given above for providing sex education are not claimed to be complete or exhaustive. They reflect the kind and range given in the literature from the 1930s to the 1990s (see Appendix 4).

4.8 WHO SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR SEX EDUCATION ?

A critical factor governing where sex education should take place is the question of who should be responsible for it. If parents are considered to be solely responsible then it should be imparted at home. If teachers

are perceived to be responsible then sex education should appear on the curriculum of all schools. Should others be regarded as better placed to accept or be given responsibility, say the parish priest, doctor or youth leader, then it follows sex education would be expected in churches, medical centres or youth clubs.

On the question of factors which influence a head's decision whether or not to implement sex education, it is self evident that his perception of who is responsible for sex education would have a significant bearing on where he thought it should be given. An examination of the literature shows a wide variety of adults who, for an equally wide variety of reasons, are regarded as having responsibility for children's sex education.

There is considerable evidence and support for the concept that parents have the fundamental responsibility for their children's sex education.

Goldman and Goldman (1982) determined that:

" Nowhere in the vast literature now available on sex education is it suggested that sex education should not take place in the home. ..it is widely recongnised that in attitudes and behaviour towards the child.. parents are home-based sex educators."
(Goldman and Goldman 1982).

Goldman and Goldman (1982) went on to discuss ways in which children were sex educated at home, often incidentally through responses to the child's exploration of its own body, toilet training, answering or avoiding questions about sex matters, issues related to the coming of a new baby, and so on. Some parents have encouraged their children to be present when a new baby was born (Mehl et al. 1977)

There might be overwhelming agreement that parents have the duty and

main responsibility for their children's sex education (S.O.U. 1969a; Davies 1993) but there is little support in the literature for parents to have the sole management of their children's sex education to the exclusion of others. Some have taken the view of parents having the sole right.

Drake (1968) who opposed the kind of sex education being developed in the 1960s saw parents as the only sex educators, both by right - since it was their natural role, and in order to counter the implementation of the 'new' sex education. He stressed the need for sex education in the home and church but NOT the school. Pickering (1965) called on all parents to help their children in respect of their sex education. Ideally, it was said, sex education was best given at home:

" Sex education has long been considered a phase of instruction which ideally should be given in the home."

(Kirkendall and Miles 1968).

Mockton (1976) speaking in a debate on sex education in the House of Lords suggested that parents wishing to sex educate their own children should have the right to withdraw them from sex education classes at school, the inference being that they were not in agreement with the kind of sex education being offered in school. More recently Hayton (1985) put forward arguments objecting to the school's intervention in sex education (Pickering 1971; Danon 1995; P.C.F. 1996).

While parents are seen as the responsible adults to give sex education and the home as the right place where it is given, it is recognised that parents are either ill-equipped to provide it or avoid doing so for a wide variety of reasons (Plowden 1967; Linner 1972; Goldman and Goldman 1988; Gamage 1989). With regard to parents' responsibilities Went (1985),

suggested a range of factors for consideration, including:

" Parents should ensure their children do know the truth about 'the facts of life' when they are ready for this information (often before they attend school) and not give them false stories..... They should answer questions on sex when they arise, thus developing good communication on sexual matters within the family.

They should provide a caring and loving home background where parents show respect and affection for each other, and help their children develop a good self image and overall physical and mental health. They should also provide moral guidelines and codes of behaviour in accordance with their race and religion but be able to accept these may need adaptation to meet changing world conditions."

(Went 1985).

Riches (1986) warned parents of what she saw as a conspiracy to wrest their responsibilities from them and the purpose of her work was to alert parents to take back the initiative. Riches (1986) traced the movement whereby parents' responsibilities were taken over by the state, back to the 1960s describing the process as the 'inevitability of gradualism'. McLeod and Davies (1992) have restated the notion that parents are the primary educators of their children in sex matters and that schools are there to assist them and not to supplant them.

Wright (1968) suggested that parents should sex educate their children up to say the age of five and then hand the responsibility over to the school. It had earlier been noted that schools should take care not to take over the role of the parents (C.E.B.E. 1964). Twenty years later the notion of usurping parental responsibility is still a consideration.

" It cannot be over emphasised that schools are not trying to usurp the parents' role in sex education."

(Went 1985).

Elsewhere, the literature contains support for the school, rather than parents as the primary agent for children's sex education.

"there is widespread realisation in schools that too many children either lack knowledge, or possess inaccurate or inadequate knowledge regarding the 'facts of life'.there is a growing conviction that it is a work that the schools must undertake."

(Board of Education 1943).

Marland (1961) referring to his sex education programme of 1946 reported the development of the programme in school using the PE teacher for boys' instruction and the school nurse for girls'. Kimborough (1966) reported responding to a need for young people to receive sex education at school. Plowden (1967) supported primary school sex education given by the children's usual class teacher. The survey conducted in the Anaheim School District (Anaheim pre-1968) found 92% of parents saying that children needed proper access to sex information, and implied their understanding that this ought to be in the school:

"if sex education were not taught in a formal manner somewhere, children would get misleading 'gutter' type information instead."

(Anaheim pre-1968).

Calderone (1968) saw the school as the primary agent:

" The school has been given by society a clear-cut role to play, to be a primary and trustworthy source of truth and factual (sex) knowledge for every child. Parents should welcome the school's efforts to present sexual facts to children as most necessary for their protection and orderly development."

(Calderone 1968).

Little (1970) concluded that the best person to tell children about sex was the child's class teacher, having said earlier:

"sex and family-life education has become a matter for formal educational discussion and dispute.... ...there is growing agreement that these problems (of sex and family-life education RF) should be given a formal place in the school curriculum and are a proper subject for professional thought and discussion."

(Little 1970).

In reporting on the increasing interest in sex education in the early

1970s, Disney (1971) agreed that the school was the best place for it. Bjork (1972) reported agreement between parents and teachers that the school could do a better job than the home, while Schofield (1973) reported children themselves saying that they preferred learning about sex at school. Whether children said that the school or the parents were their preferred source of sex information they all, nevertheless, wanted to have more sex education at school than they were getting (Schofield 1973).

Crowther-Hunt (1976) reminded his fellow Peers that a large majority of young people would have liked to have had sex education at school, and that at that time precious few had received adequate sex education from their schools. He felt that the case for sex education in schools, was proven.

Farrell (1978) found that about the same number of parents, especially from the lower socio-economic groups, thought that teachers should be the first to tell children about where babies came from and sexual intercourse, compared with mothers (percentages were within the range of 29 % - 35 %).

In discussing sex education as a concern of the school, David and Wise (1987) said:

" One of the potential strengths of the school's involvement is that it can provide a trusting environment in which children learn to respect and tolerate differences and to recognise and perhaps understand many human aspirations and fears and the challenge for the school may be to develop an agenda which complements and supplements the family-based advice, guidance and instruction, and compensates for omissions.

The diversity of family backgrounds in a school or community cannot be reflected in any one family, so the school may have an important role to play in providing a forum in which tolerance and sharing of experience may be promoted in a multicultural society."

(David and Wise 1987).

Much of the consideration given to the school as being a primary agent in children's sex education arises from the widely held perceptions that it is a job which parents do not, or cannot do, even though they are invariably seen as having the pre-eminent responsibility for their children's sex education. This understanding of parental failure and the subsequent acceptance of the responsibility by schools has long been evident in the literature. It was referred to in the F.P.S.I's Conference report (1935), the Board of Education's pamphlet in 1943, and variously up to recent times, as may be seen, for example, from the following; Bibby (1944); Schofield (1965); Dawkins (1967); Braestrup (1970); Farrell (1978); Fidge (1978); Goldman and Goldman (1982). To underline the fact of parental failure in the mid 1960s, and the only hope for a subsequent parental 'recovery', Schofield (1965), observed:

" The best hope for those who believe that parents are the people who can do most to prepare children for a healthy sexual life is to help the generation now at school to become the kind of parents who can speak simply and sensibly about sex to their children."

(Schofield 1965).

That parents have not regained the 'initiative' is evident from the focus Riches (1986) has in her pamphlet, but whether parents and others would agree with her analysis that certain agencies or individuals involved in current sex education practice and implementation are perpetrating some kind of a subversive plot, remains to be seen.

In spite of some progress concerning the implementation of sex education it could still be said in the late 1980s that:

" We shared a common concern that, within our society, sex education is mostly left to chance learning - caught, more often than taught."

(C.C. 1989).

The issue of absolute parental responsibility is undermined by the inability of many parents to sex educate their own children. The issue of the school as the absolute provider of sex education has never been the case, and the non-compulsory nature of sex education provision is a fundamental significant factor in this study. The probability that fewer than half the primary schools provide any form of sex education undermines the idea of the school monopolising the provision of formal sex education to children. An answer has long been sought to the question of who is responsible for children's sex education and there is wide coverage in the literature of the popular view that it should be a shared responsibility between the parents and the school (Ray and Went 1995).

Faithfull (1935) recommended individual instruction of the child by both parents and teachers to provide an 'ideal sex education'. Van Gelderen (1935) considered it essential for the parents to instruct the child before it came to school, when the school would have an additional input. Chance (1935) noted a growing advocacy for sex education in the home and school. Wide scope for collaboration between home and school was perceived (Bibby 1944) as sex education was an area where it was essential for home and school to work together (Gagern 1953). The school and parents were seen to act as a partnership (C.E.B.E. 1964), enabling children to receive sex information from both sources (Calderone 1965). Chanter (1966) agreed and Hector (1966) maintained it to be the circumstance which enabled the 'best' results. Numerous other contributors refer to this shared role (Edwards 1967; Iseman 1968; Masters and Johnson 1968; Kind 1968; Praestrup 1970; Proops 1971; Linner 1971; Gill et al. 1971; Schofield 1973; Mocketon 1976;

Chelmsford 1976; Fidge 1978; David and Wise 1987; C.C. 1989; T.E.S. 1992).

Concerning this relationship, Schulz and Williams (1968), claimed:

" Together, parents and school can help prepare young people to view the world and their role in it with healthy sexual attitudes and a meaningful awareness of the joys and responsibilities of family living."

(Schulz and Williams 1968).

Blishen (1969) saw the position as:

" The modern view is that parents and schools should act as a team, each sustaining the other in the developing programme of sex education.most parents appreciate the contribution to sex education that can be provided by schools."

(Blishen 1969).

Jilani (1970) saw a shared effort between home and school but drew out the fact that mothers bore the main responsibility for dealing with children's sexual matters in the home and were better than fathers in discharging their responsibility. This difference was also noted and supported by Fidge (1978) and Farrell (1978). As well as providing basic sex information, attitudes, concepts and behaviour patterns, the school and parents are called upon to provide a balance to what children get from the mass media (T.E.S. 1992). Heads' views on who they think has the primary responsibility for providing sex education will be influenced by many of these factors, and affect the decisions they take.

4.9 SOME AIMS OF SEX EDUCATION

Details of the references and support for the aims set out in this section are found in Appendix 4. The aims are collated in groups similar to those used for the reasons for sex education from the literature.

One of the main aims of sex education is 'to facilitate personal development'. Different areas and aspects of personal development are

referred to in the literature so the expressed aims are often very specific. Some refer to the development of different aspects of character and personality, such as the development of self image, self esteem, self understanding, well-being and autonomy. Other aims envisage teaching abstinence, self restraint and protecting a child's innocence, purity and modesty. Aims designed to prepare children for responsible sexual behaviour, able to cope with future problems, leading to a comfortable expression of an individual's sexual identity and a full, happy, mature and satisfying sex-life could be included within the general terms of personal development.

The concept of innocence can embody a degree of conflict or ambiguity. Some adults might use it to keep sexual information from children until they deem it appropriate to give it. The information might be thought unsuitable or the children are not yet ready or old enough to have it. Others argue that giving or withholding sex information could lead to a confusion between innocence and ignorance. Others think giving sexual information to children will remedy their ignorance without necessarily destroying their innocence. The issue of innocence being kept intact, by restricting information, or by not being destroyed by giving information, could influence the head's decision-making process regarding sex education. A head's notion of childhood 'innocence' and whether or not it is destroyed by sexual information, could be instrumental in deciding whether or not to introduce sex education.

The development of communication skills regarding children asking for information and ways and means of sharing and giving information between

children and adults feature in the aims expressed in the literature. The development of interpersonal relationships and the skills associated with sexual decision-making are also seen in relation to personal development and communication skills.

Children will need to know accurate biological and physiological information in understanding their own sexuality. This seems particularly important in respect to their proper understanding of bodily functions and preparation for pubertal change.

Aims which concern the mental health of the child are found in connection with problems of possible fear, anxiety, or guilt which are said to be the result of leaving children uninstructed. A child's emotional development forms a central feature of some aims which recognise that issues concerning the emotions need to be explored, and can be better handled where children have already got wholesome basic sex facts and attitudes.

A basic aim is to satisfy the natural curiosity children have of the world around them, and with this build up of basic sexual knowledge, the development of a proper working vocabulary. Giving of knowledge, will address another common aim, that of correcting misinformation, however acquired. The knowledge aims form a connecting link with the communication skills in regard to question and answer strategies, and in particular the honesty and truthfulness with which responses are given.

Aims which deal with broad sexual concepts are found in the literature. Many of these have to do with moral questions, like making informed moral

choices, having a considered moral code, considering moral and ethical questions, developing integrity, and so on. Related to moral issues are attitudinal ones, and aims to develop healthy attitudes, and a sympathetic understanding of social values are also featured.

Concepts of conscience, consideration, tolerance, normality and difference are found in many aims which relate to the way sexuality affects both personality and behaviour. An understanding of the variety of human sexual behaviour, and the pressure, influences and consequences of sexual behaviour are aspects of further stated aims.

Social conditions affect sexuality and are affected by it and sex education aims which relate to social matters include, learning social norms, respect for social customs, understanding the nature and dynamics of society, learning social skills, and coping with social problems. Arising from these aims are additional aims like; the need to be aware of the concerns of others, and an understanding of social responsibility. Social awareness and responsibility encompasses a knowledge of health care systems, population and birth control issues, concepts of personal and community safety, the adoption of appropriate roles and a need to guard against irresponsible anti-social behaviour.

The position of the family, as a unit of society generates particular aims and these include such concepts as, preparing for family life, an understanding of the importance and diversity of the family, consideration of love, loyalty, cohesiveness and responsibility in family affairs. Other related aims would include a consideration of marriage and other

relationships which support family situations, the understanding of love and sex in the context of a stable family, possible notions of stability, chastity, integrity, fidelity and happiness, with responsible family planning leading to clear foundations for responsible parenting

Fundamental to these aims for sex education are those which inculcate notions of right and wrong, learning how and when to say 'no', appreciating ideas of fulfilment, the miracle of life, and the wonder of creation.

Some of these aims might be seen as contradictory. For example the idea of training for chastity, and developing personal freedom and autonomy; or the ideals of marriage, and the development of one's own moral code, in the light of non-judgmental attitudes to different sexual orientations; or various moral or ethical stances towards contraception, pre-marital sex, and so on.

Considering which aims to include in a programme of sex education, getting materials to support these aims can create problems which influence decisions whether or not to implement sex education.

4.10 SOME OUTCOMES OF SEX EDUCATION

This section summarises the outcomes listed in Appendix 4 where details of the references may be found. The sex education outcomes are in three categories:

1. Beneficial.
2. Neutral.
3. Negative.
 - a. Due to receiving no sex education.
 - b. Due to receiving sex education.

It is possible that influence flows from a knowledge (or perception) of the outcomes of sex education whether beneficial or detrimental and that this influence might affect the kind of decisions a head makes in determining whether or not to introduce sex education into the school curriculum.

Sex education is said to have many beneficial outcomes and these may be seen in terms of correcting certain faults, developing particular skills and characteristics, overcoming problems and difficulties and providing benefits both for the individual and for the society in which that individual lives. All of the outcomes, if beneficial could be seen as powerful reasons for introducing sex education where it does not yet exist and for developing it further, where it does.

" (Sex) Education has not only the positive aspect of imparting knowledge, but also the preventative aspect of warding off harmful influences."

(Werthan 1955).

Sex education corrects misinformation and negative or wrong attitudes. It increases knowledge of sexual matters, which in turn gives rise to healthy attitudes and confidence. Sex education provides factual information and an appropriate vocabulary and frees children to approach their parents and teachers on sex matters. It prepares children for puberty and to cope with the physical and emotional changes they will experience. Their personal development is enhanced in many respects, and by the nurturing of their individual well-being, and protection, the society in which the children are growing benefits from greater social well-being, and the development of a safer, happier, healthier mentally and physically, more prosperous and secure community.

Many adults fail to realise how young children are when they begin to know and understand basic sex information. Sex education provides a basis for the child's conceptual development and enables the development of communication skills. This ability to communicate about sex encourages improved and meaningful discussion at home and in class between children teachers and parents, and allows for the development of greater trust and understanding, and closer relationships, between all parties.

Happiness, self assurance, self-empowerment, self-esteem, confidence, security, responsible sexual social and moral attitudes are all claimed as sex education outcomes. It enables children to appreciate differing values in society. Social integration and the development of an individual sexual ethic result from effective sex education together with the skills of making responsible sexual choices and decisions, developing appropriate sex roles, behavioural skills and the capacity to prevent or deal with sexual problems.

" The more you learn about sex, the less you will be afraid of it."

(Calderone in: Ferber and Sofokidis 1966)

Sex education overcomes pre-marital sex, experimentation and promiscuity and promotes sensible sexual behaviour. It promotes safer sex practices, reduces teen pregnancies, delays the start of sexual intercourse, reduces spread of HIV/AIDS. It overcomes fear, doubt and ignorance, harm caused by sex information from unreliable sources, and obviates the need for a child to invent explanations for sexual matters he is made aware of but cannot accommodate in his scheme of things.

Sex education overcomes sex related social disadvantage, harmful

influences, sexual and emotional problems and inhibiting embarrassment. It inculcates friendship skills, develops tolerance and understanding, encourages concepts of responsibility, integrity, honour, trust, restraint and enables a better understanding of family matters. Clearly all such outcomes are regarded as beneficial.

Some declared outcomes of sex education are of themselves, neither positive or negative. Where a contributor to the literature simply says that sex education has an influence on a child's emotional experience, social attitudes, and psychological and physical experiences, the reader is left with no indication of the nature of the influence. Outcomes like; sex education has an impact on patterns of behaviour, or affects the personal areas of a child's life, are in the same neutral category.

To state that sex education did not significantly improve the knowledge of children compared to those who were uninstructed, or that knowing little or nothing does not deter sexual activity might be seen to suggest that there is not much point in engaging in sex education. It is axiomatic that ineffective sex education is of no value, nor is sex education which is given too late. But giving no sex education at all has consequences.

The literature reflects results from receiving no sex education, and such results could be seen as the outcomes of non-sex education. It is reported that such non-sex education has evil results; children are not prepared for life, they have insufficient and incomplete knowledge, and suffer discord and confusion when they have to unlearn the disinformation they receive.

Non-sex education leaves socially contrived sex roles and stereotypes unchanged, and allows ignorance, guilt and taboo to affect the enjoyment of adult sexuality. The adult personality will also be adversely affected. Without sex education children will experiment and develop anti-social behaviour, difficulties will arise for those who have not discussed sex and tension, distrust and a lack of confidence will exist between children and parents.

Non-sex education will engender fear and worry, particularly at the onset of puberty, and wrong sex attitudes will give rise to mental conflict, torment and anguish, and a high proportion of emotional problems. There is also some suggestion that 'religious' sex education will be unsuccessful, because it is linked to religious tenets.

Contributors to the literature who are generally opposed to sex education (or anything which is not their brand of sex education) claim many outcomes of a harmful or negative nature. Sex education will upset, hurt, overwhelm, disturb, and embarrass, sensitive children who are not ready for it, causing them anxiety, fear and guilt.

" The embarrassing frankness of many sex education programmes forces the sensitive child to suppress his normal emotion-charged feelings... This may develop into serious anxieties."
(Drake 1968).

Through sex education children will become easy prey to amoral philosophies, be subjected to amoral and perverted ideas, and in moral danger. Sex education casts doubt on traditional moral teaching and brings about a deterioration in moral conditions. It will destroy chastity and the life-long relationship of marriage. The concepts of

trust, fortitude, unselfishness and commitment are weakened by the plague-type sex education which is foisted upon our children.

Detrimental changes in sexual behaviour will develop as a result of sex education, with children indulging in sex play, erotic stimulation, sexual experimentation and inappropriate adult sexual activity while still young teenagers. Juvenile delinquency will be encouraged. People will become sexual idiots, gripped by sexual hysteria, with girls becoming pregnant, boys diseased, and all are very likely to experience sexual dysfunctions later in life.

These contributors claim that sex education will; drive a wedge between family, church and school, promote the idea of recreational sex, will be problematic due to unsuitable/unqualified teachers and will result in tragedy. They say that there is no certainty that sex education is of any real value and are in no doubt that liberal sex education fails. These are the adverse outcomes claimed for the type of sex education with which these contributors disagree. In their condemnation they state only the harmful consequences they claim come from modern, liberal, non-religious sex education, and imply wholesome outcomes from their type of sex education.

Sex education breaks down social constraints, provides inappropriate information, represses parental responsibility for child's sex education, encourages sexual excess and experiments, undermines child's conscience. It is destroying the social conscience, encourages pornography and abuse, destroys innocence. Sex education obsessed with prevention will have unfavourable outcomes.

Many sex programmes in schools pay lipservice to family values, present flawed moral choices, transmit the ideologies of the abortion/birth control lobbies, fail to guide correct sexual behaviour, promote homosexuality.

There is conflict, contradiction and ambivalence in these claims. On the one hand sex education is said to be beneficial increasing trust and understanding between children and adults, calming anxieties, correcting misinformation etc. Others claim it is detrimental and gives rise to problems, encourages children to experiment and become sexually active and puts barriers between families and schools. Heads' perceptions of both detrimental and beneficial outcomes will influence their decisions.

4.11 THE AGE TO BEGIN SEX EDUCATION

The age at which people say sex education should begin could indicate whether or not they regarded it appropriate for primary aged children. An adult saying it should not begin until, say thirteen, could be indicating the fact that they do not agree with sex education in the primary school. They are also saying something of their understanding of children's sexual development and needs. An adult saying it should begin at eight might be expected to agree with primary school sex education.

It should be safe to presume that a head who supports sex education in the primary school would agree that some time between the ages of 5 to 11 (or before that) is appropriate for making a start. But the relationship between a head's perception concerning the age at which sex education should start and whether that is a factor in deciding if it is appropriate for the primary school curriculum, is not necessarily a simple one.

This section examines the question of when sex education should begin, and whether, stating an age which falls before, or within the age range of primary schooling is necessarily an indication of support for primary school sex education.

Appendix 5 gives a diagrammatic representation of examples from the literature from the 1930s to the 1990s, of educationalists and others who have expressed an opinion, published research or survey findings about when sex education should begin. The examples come from the wide body of literature examined in the course of this study and are included because the authors have given a specific indication of the age (or stage) they considered appropriate.

In Appendix 5 there are 17 different ages or stages given, ranging from birth to 11 Years, and these are variously grouped into:

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------|------------------|---------|---------|
| Pre-school. | Nursery. | Infant. | Junior. | ...and, |
| Non - School (Informal). | | School (Formal). | | |

From the data four significant starting points are evident and these are:

1. When children ask questions.
2. At the age of five or the beginning of primary education.
3. In the junior school or stage.
4. At the age of nine or in preparation for puberty.

12.7% of the authors (e.g. Badley 1935; L.C.C. 1964; Rodhe 1972; Althea 1975) say the right time to begin is when children start asking questions. This stage can be problematic since the age at which questions might be asked is unpredictable and random. The concept of waiting for the child to ask is regarded as an indication that the child is ready for the

information. But there are many reasons for suggesting that this is not an ideal strategy for deciding when to begin (Quinn and Quinn 1981).

Adults who want children sex educated and decide to start when children ask questions face a dilemma when the questions are not asked in the first place or, having started either dry up and do not re-appear later.

Problems result if questions are asked at the wrong time or in inappropriate circumstances and the unexpectedness of this approach can make it inconvenient to plan, develop or anticipate the child's requirements (Bibby 1944; Goldman and Goldman 1988).

In a school where an apparent openness to sex education is established in terms of a policy to provide answers in response to questions, sex education may never take place or at best be random and sporadic (St Saviour's 1997). Such may be the case with parents who claim to use questions as a trigger to sex education. This is because questions are often never asked (Fidge 1978, 1978b), or if asked, are side-stepped or deferred, so that a seemingly sex educating adult or institution, could use the 'response to question' stance as a ploy to cover a non-sex education policy.

The largest significant stage to begin is the age of five (the beginning of primary education) which is stated by 15.2% the authors as being the optimum starting point, either in specific terms or generally, through the concept of sex education being undertaken 'in the primary school' (e.g. Dawkins 1957; Manley 1964; Bjork 1972; Docherty 1985). The next significant stage, stated by 11.4% of those sources listed suggests the beginning of the junior school or at junior age (e.g. Conn 1947; Holmes et al 1968;

H.E.C. 1972). The last important age is nine years (8.9%) and this is probably because it is pitched to support the idea of giving sex education in preparation for the onset of puberty (e.g. Foster 1959; C.E.B.E. 1964; H.E.C. 1972). Another way of considering evidence of support from those examples in the literature is to view the total weighting of each of the four bands of, 1. Pre-school, 2. Nursery, 3. Infant and 4. Junior.

30.4% (N = 24) of the contributors suggest a start within the early years /pre-school band. 13.9% (N = 11) suggest starting during the nursery stage. 20.3% (N = 16) prefer an infant school start. The largest grouping, 35.4% (N = 28) consider starting during the junior stage. If the nursery and infant stages are combined and regarded as the 'middle years' the weight of support in the three chronological stages is: Pre-school = 30.4%, Nursery/Infant = 34.2%, Junior = 35.4%, suggesting a slight preference for starting in the junior age range although each age group is similar. Over the years opinion whether to start pre-school or primary school has generally been around the 33% (pre-school) : 66% (primary school) ratio.

But there has been a shift from starting during the junior stage some years ago to a more recent approach of starting at an earlier age, but still within the primary range (see Appendix 5). Not all contributors to the literature have restricted themselves to a single age or stage at which to start. For example:

" ...two very important ages for many points of sex education are 3 - 5 and 10 - 12 years. Thus it should be realised that the age of 14 - 16 is too late to begin sex education."
(U.N.E.S.C.O. 1965).

Several different ages or developmental points in the flow of a child's sex education is found in other examples in the literature from each broad chronological period (e.g. Bibby 1944; Gager 1953; Edmonds 1968; Gill et al. 1971; Went 1985). Having started a child's sex education, many feel that the developmental path along which it travels has several other significant stages en route.

Stating an age to begin usually implies that school-based sex education is being proposed, but this may not be so since the commentator could have home-based sex education in mind. It seems highly probable that heads' views of the appropriate age to begin sex education or give sex information suggests whether or not they agree with school-based sex education.

Some have questioned the basic assumption of considering an age to begin.

Bibby (1944) said:

" Sometimes at meetings the question is posed directly: " At what age should sex education take place ? "; but this is quite clearly a query to which there is no simple answer. No one age can be prescribed for sex education, any more than it can for any other aspect of health education or character training. Sex education should surely be a continuous process from the cradle to the grave and the question should really be re-phrased to read: "What aspects of sex education are particularly appropriate to different ages ?" (Bibby 1944).

Broderick (1966) suggested that the question 'At what age should sex education begin ?' should rather be:

" How can persons best be helped to cope with their sexual experiences and potential at any age ? " (Broderick 1966).

But not all sources in the literature are age-specific. Reiss (1968) argued that all children at all ages were 'ready' for sex education, the only question was to find the appropriate means of delivering it to them.

Some authors have a circumstantial, conditional or developmental basis for establishing the point to begin sex education. This is the case with McLeod and Davies (1992), for example, whose stance of answering children's questions as and when they arise is fundamental to their position. While they agree with sex education as and when children ask questions, and imply that this is well within, if not before, the primary stage, they are firmly against school-based sex education.

" Answering them (children's questions RF) as they come along is a gradual, painless procedure, and parents can prepare themselves ahead. Children should be given only as much information as they need. This will depend on their level of maturity and degree of understanding at the time, and we would put forward that those closest to the child would be the best judge of this."

(McLeod and Davies 1992).

Elsewhere the concept of understanding provided the key to begin:

"..as soon as the child can understand what you say."

(Rodhe 1972).

" As soon as youngsters are old enough to observe their parents relating."

(Masters and Johnson 1968).

The case for 'individualised sex education, in response to each child's personal readiness', had been considered and rejected by some:

" There are still people maintaining that school is not the right place for sex education as children mature at different rates, thus, in a class it would be difficult to cater for all. The only satisfactory way to give information is when the child is ready, so sex education can start early and follow continuous development over many years. This may be an attractive argument, but unrealistic."

(Schofield 1973).

Responding when the child is ready may seem an obvious and ideal point at which to start sex education but it may not be easy to decide at what age a child is 'ready'. Those who advocate waiting until children are ready could be like those who respond only to questions and use this apparent willingness to undertake sex education as a cover for not doing it.

Experience has shown that questions are often not asked and 'readiness' is difficult to define. Non-users of the B.B.C. materials (BBC 1971) tended to excuse/explain their non-use in terms of a recommendation that they should be promoted only when the children were 'ready'.

The issue of content which Bibby (1944) saw as being 'child driven', gave rise to questions which triggered progress in a child's sex education so that for the child asking about the father's role in pro-creation he said:

" The right time for enlightenment is when the child seeks it,
not when the parent thinks an appropriate age has been reached."
(Bibby 1944).

Other indicators when to start can be as vague as waiting for children to ask questions. Schofield (1973) referred to the onset of 'curiosity'.

" ...it is reasonable to assume that they only found out about sex in this way (from friends RF) because we adults did not provide a better method before their curiosity was aroused."
(Schofield 1973).

Equally vague was the advice from the Board of Education (1943) that sex education should be introduced '...at an early age before strong emotional associations develop...'. Some of the authors have introduced the negative concept of 'when not to start sex education', and this is invariably expressed in terms of 'too little and too late'.

"boys coming to us from preparatory schools are already filled with repressions, inhibitions and taboos on all matters of sex. It may well be argued that at this age it is too late to give them proper sex education, if it has been done badly in the nursery or in childhood. In fact at the age of 12 it is not so much sex education, but a de-conditioning and releasing from wrong ideas that is the important part of our work. It is sex re-education."
(Ottaway 1935).

Referring to the schemes that had been seen from schools for 3rd and 4th year secondary schools (NC years 9 and 10) C.E.B.E. (1964) said:

" A valid comment on them would be that which adorns sundials, 'It is later than you think'; not only because by that stage most children have picked up a good deal of information, and most are into puberty, but because an opportunity has been missed."

(C.E.B.E. 1964).

" Thus it should be realised that the age of 14 - 16 is too late to begin sex education."

(U.N.E.S.C.O. 1965).

One of the main objections to the B.B.C sex education initiative was that the children were too young for the kind of material used (B.B.C. 1971).

" Many countries begin their sex education at 13 or 14 when much of it will be too little and too late for a large number of children."

(Dallas 1972).

Farrell (1978) reported that the usual age for sex education lessons to begin in secondary schools was 13, which was two to three years later than when children generally found out about reproduction and sexual intercourse (Collyer 1995). But little has changed:

" Human sexual reproduction is taught in the third term of Year 7 (when children are nearly 13 RF) as a routine part of the Biology syllabus. As a natural progression sexual reproduction in plants is studied.

Moral and social aspects of Sex Education are covered mainly, in the Personal and Social Education programme in Year 10 (when children are 15 RF)."

(W.G.S.B. 1992).

At times it may be thought that the use of a circumstantial, conditional or developmental stage for beginning sex education is used to avoid a particular commitment to sex education while appearing to be supportive of it (Scott and Thomson 1992; Farquhar 1994). This might be concluded in some schools where the policy is for non-structured sex education based on answering children's questions as and when they arise (Green 1994). But for all practical purposes this might mean no sex education at all in view of the many heads who have said that throughout their whole careers (career

so far), no child had ever asked them sex questions (Fidge 1978b).

The style and sequencing of sex education in a school, related to the 'age to begin' factor, can also modify whether or not children receive 'worthwhile' sex education. For example in schools where sex education is said to begin for eight year olds but is only ever given in the first year junior class (year 3) and at no other point in the junior career so that children, asked at the age of 12 if they had sex education at junior school said that they had not, and would have appreciated it (Fidge 1978a).

It is probable that the degree of formality-informality of sex education is implicit in the idea of the age to begin since it is likely that those suggesting ages in the pre-school range have an informal approach in mind. Where people advocate an early start (pre-school) it is reasonable to presume that this suggests continuity from that point on. It does not follow that this would be given within the context of the school. Sex education in the upper primary school has been characterised by a certain formality and planned structure (Tame 1960; B.B.C. 1971; Went 1985).

Stating an age or stage to begin sex education has implications for the style, manner and delivery, of sex education, within the school or home. It need not support the idea of school-based sex education, does not necessarily indicate the level of formality or informality, could indicate the reality of the provision, which is also constrained both by the adult's meaning of sex education and the policy or style of the provision within the school. Most of the examples listed in Appendix 5 suggest that stating an age to begin, can be a positive indication of support for

school-based sex education but this factor needs to be treated with caution as the relationship of the 'age to begin' factor and the provision of sex education in school is a complicated one. Heads who agree with sex education in the primary school and are prepared to develop it in their schools imply a starting age at some point along the birth to 11 years continuum.

4.12 ARGUMENTS AGAINST SEX EDUCATION

The arguments against sex education with which headteachers might agree, fall into three broad categories:

1. Those who contend that sex education is totally unnecessary.
2. Those opposed to school-based sex education.
3. Those opposed to the content, style or basic principles of school-based sex education, but would agree, given their proposed stringent safeguards:

In examining the literature for this study, only one contributor claims that the majority need no sex education whatsoever, namely Pirone (1969).

Pirone (1969) basing his opinion on the paravolutionary origin of human sexuality dissented from the almost universal view that somehow, either formally or informally, at home, school, or wherever, all needed some kind of sex education. He maintained that about 70% of all children needed no sex education, should not be exposed to it and are more hurt than helped by the information made available to them, even by the best programmes available. The remaining 30% Pirone (1969) said needed intense homosexual education because their basic sex instincts were perverted. He claimed that discoveries in molecular biology discredited the work of Freud and

pointed to the true biological beginnings of all human social behaviour. Much opposition to school-based sex education is based on claims that the state of society is in many cases the result of the kind of sex education programmes that were given. Petrus (1962) alleged the outcomes of premature sex education would '... make our population into sexual idiots'. Drake (1968) warned of the sexual hysteria and disease among the youth which resulted from sex education in Sweden and predicted that the use of such sex education programmes as those of S.I.E.C.U.S., in the U.S.A. would have similar results. Drake (1968) claimed that the 'embarrassing frankness' of such teaching forced sensitive children to repress their normal emotion-charged feelings. This resulted in anxieties within the kindergarten and sex play and experimentation amongst junior children. Such education was said to drive wedges between the family, church and school, casting doubt on traditional morality so that children could become easy prey to Marxism, other nihilistic philosophies and V.D.

" It should be evident that the sex educators are in league with sexologists, who represent every shade of muddy gray morality.... ministers (of religion RF) coloured atheistic pink, and camp followers of every persuasion - off beat psychiatrists to ruthless publishers of pornography.... However be not of faint heart, for to know your enemy is half the battle."

(Drake 1968).

Lorand (1969) opposed school sex education because she claimed that:

" It (the sex education programme RF) is overwhelming, disturbing and embarrassing, upsetting and exciting and very likely to lead to sex difficulties later in life."

(Lorand 1969).

Pickering (1965), supporting the church's role in sex education, argued that the sex instruction encouraged by the secular authorities was wrong, because it was far too detailed. He saw the aim of sex education, not as

giving information, but of training the will."

Consideration of opposition in other countries might offer some insights into the possible reasons for non implementation here.

In Denmark there was opposition to sex education from both parents and local authorities in many areas. Its introduction tended to be successful in larger towns and cities, but not in rural districts and villages where the old prejudices were strongest (Bach 1965). It was eventually challenged in the European Court by a group of Danish parents. The judgement given in 1976 was that compulsory sex education was not a breach of the European Convention on Human Rights provided the education authorities did not disregard parents' religious and philosophical convictions (Education 1977).

Fidge (1978) referred to the opposition in the U.S.A. with the John Birch Society launching a nationwide initiative against sex education and with many local associations such as 'Sanity on Sex (SOS), Parents for Orthodoxy in Parochial Education (POPE), Mothers for Moral Stability (MOMS), pressing their claims against sex education with such slogans as ' Teach students to read; not breed." In Australia there was concerted opposition from parents (C.P.A. 1980), and opposition registered in debates and commissions at various levels of government (Austalian G.P.S. 1977; Queensland Parliament 1980). The reasons given being very similar to those cited in the U.K. There is still vocal opposition to school-based sex education here (Davies 1993; Whelan 1995; Haywood 1996; Reiss 1996; T.E.S. 1996a).

The third category comprises those opposed to the content, style or basic principles of school-based sex education, but would agree, given their proposed stringent safeguards.

One safeguard frequently cited is that the teachers who handle sex education should be approved, vetted, trained and reliable, but by whom would they be approved? Trained in what methods and to deliver what content? Vetted by whom, and against what criteria? Reliable? In what regard? Reliable to teach what they are told; can be relied upon to teach nothing of which the, parents, church, L.E.A., head, D.f.E. disapproves? Such safeguards might serve to pacify concern or criticism from certain quarters, but are unable to satisfy all parties to the debate.

Parents' rights (e.g. to be consulted; to inspect/vet the materials used; to withdraw their children) are promoted as a necessary safeguard to ensure the right kind of sex education. But there are many problems inherent in this. Should sex education content, timing, methods, personnel and other strategies be determined by the parents? ...and if so how is this to be achieved and implemented? Do parents want this power? Does the overwhelming finding among parents, that they think sex education should be a 'shared responsibility' with the schools, really mean that they prefer the schools to get on with it, allowing them to deal with occasional questions which might come up at home, in the best way they can?

There is no more consensus among parents as to what constitutes proper sex education as there is in other groups of people. More significantly, one might ask in what other areas of the curriculum are parents expected to

determine what will occur ?

The concept of parental involvement or consultation, includes a great deal of ambivalence in terms of just how real and influential it is. Some might argue that there is a necessary pragmatism in enabling parent participation, but that the actual power or influence parents can exercise is more theoretical than actual. Others however have reported serious concern that parental involvement could engender problems and through fear of conflict, are likely to leave sex education alone.

Where heads have consulted parents many of the fears expressed were not evident, but the nature of influence often resides in the strongly held belief that such an eventuality will occur and there is no desire to test it.

The inclusion of health warnings as an integral part of sex education has been a necessary safeguard for some. This embodies the idea that if you tell children how horrible some sex-related matters could be, they won't go and 'do it'. AIDS, has tended to put other sex-related problems in a less 'horrible' category, since they have some kind of cure.

Many with reservations against sex education claim that associated with knowledge and understanding of topics such as AIDS, are some 'unpleasant' issues which are unsuitable for young children to know. Some opponents argue that they 'knew nothing about it at that age, so why is it necessary now ?' The lack of understanding of both how children respond to sex knowledge and what is necessary information today, causes confusion for some.

The provision of moral considerations is a further requirement made by many in an attempt to secure the 'right kind of sex education' for their children and this is now embodied in the regulations (DES 1987; DfE 1994).

" The local education authority by whom any county, voluntary or special school is maintained, and the governing body and head teacher of the school, shall take such steps as are reasonably practicable to secure that where sex education is given to any registered pupils at the school it is given in such a manner as to encourage those pupils to have due regard to moral considerations and the value of family life."

(Section 48. Education (No.2) Act 1986).

Teaching about the rightness of personal behaviour, moral standards and codes of conduct in all relationships are paramount prerequisites for some, 'Chastity outside marriage and fidelity within, offered in the context of a Christian understanding of love, marriage and the family' (White and Kidd 1976; Ferrers 1976; Norwich 1976; John Paul II 1981; Davies and McLeod 1996; E.F.C 1996) is a typical formula for this ideal. This gives rise to questions such as: What is meant by 'family' ? Is something always right or wrong in differing circumstances and for all people at all times ? Why 'Christian' understanding, particularly in a multi-cultural society ? Is there an undisputed moral code for all ?

These are fundamental questions which weaken the certainty of the 'rock-like' position of the moralist and make it increasingly difficult for those developing sex education to satisfy all opinion lobbies. Some heads feel a duty to meet the needs of all their pupils, as fully and as sensitively as possible. Others may find the attempt to try to 'please all yet please none', an effort not worth taking. The uncertainty of how best to accommodate differing positions could suggest potential conflict, and act as a negative influence in matters of sex education.

Opposition to sex education can also be categorised:

1. Detrimental outcomes of sex education.
2. Research Issues.
3. Community, Cultural and Religious Issues.
4. Societal Issues.
5. Family Issues:
6. School Issues.

To illustrate these some examples follow. Agreement with them could influence head teachers' decisions regarding sex education.

Many reasons for and against sex education have much common ground. Fundamental to understanding the reasons given within these areas of commonality is the need to recognise the moral or philosophical positions of the protagonists in the debate and/or the implied social mechanisms which they believe operate. For example, the question of teenage sexual activity is an issue common to both sides of the debate; opponents claiming it is the result of sex education (Engel 1987; F.Y.C. 1994; Whelan 1995; F.Y.C 1997/8a) and supporters claiming it is a manifestation of our current society and sex education is needed to counter it (Jones et al 1985; Kirby et al 1994; Wellings et al 1995).

Detrimental outcomes of sex education: Opponents claimed that it aroused curiosity and encouraged experimentation amongst children (Brewer 1962; Burke 1970; Goldman and Goldman 1982). That sex education encouraged sexual promiscuity among the young (F.Y.C. 1994) was said to be the product of insufficient knowledge (Farrell 1978; Gordon 1979). Other outcomes, such as the spread of V.D. (Burke 1970), putting children into moral danger

(Petrus 1962; Burke 1970), creating sexual hysteria (Drake 1968) and making children shameless (Guardian 1960 [quoted in Brewer 1962]) were also reasons to oppose sex education. Eickhoff's (1992) study of the effects of sex education concluded that much of it was harmful.

Research Issues: It was said that there was far too little research into the effects of sex education (Burke 1970). Some deduced that until the effects were more fully known it was best to be cautious and not give any. Goldman and Goldman (1982) reported that children's sexuality and matters pertaining to it like sex education, were distinctly difficult areas to research because of the frequent reluctance of many adults to agree to such projects due to the wide discomfort, apprehension and suspicion they experienced in response to these matters.

Groups like C.A.R.E. opposed to current sex education trends (Chichester 1986) conduct research and promote and distribute materials which support their case. McLeod and Davies (1992) maintain that the explicit sex education given to mixed primary classes is an unresearched and untried initiative as there are:

"....no academic seats of learning to formulate programmes, or to train and monitor those who provide them'.

Some of the most influential pieces of research into human sexuality have been the Kinsey Reports (Kinsey et al. 1948, 1953) and those opposed to sex education have observed that:

" It is impossible to underestimate the far-reaching influence these oft-quoted reports have had on sexual attitudes, sexual behaviour and sex education policies. The Kinsey reports provided a blueprint for the sex education missionaries - and the long term effects on Western society are obvious."

(Riches 1986).

Community, Cultural and Religious Issues: Culture, local custom, and religious precepts have long been issues which have provided opposition to sex education (U.N.E.S.C.O. 1967; Bjork 1972; Farrag 1976; Honey 1978; Sarwar 1989; K.T.E.S. 1991). Reviewing arguments against sex education, Burke (1970), referred to some opponents stressing that sex educators:

"...obtain the collaboration of community leaders, educators, religious organisations, professionals and parent groups in the preparation of the programme".

The inference being that this would provide some kind of brake or check on the programme. Dwyer (1973) said there was abundant evidence that much of the Victorian Code was still affecting Western attitudes, and activities such as those in America to do away with sex education in schools (see Fidge 1978), and Australia (Geelong Advertiser 1980) provide substance to this claim.

Religious and cultural issues were stressed in Circulars 11/87 and 5/94 as important considerations in primary schools when answering sex-related questions and planning school policy programmes (D.E.S. 1987; DfE 1994)). Anticipation of difficulties in regard to these factors could engender caution in a head considering whether or not to implement sex education.

Societal Issues: Cosgrave (1974) referred to concerted efforts made by powerful lobbies to radically alter society and the concept of the family, both here and else-where. Much of this thrust was made through sex education and seen by him as one of the most damaging threats to society. The international nature of the 'awesome' power with which the population-control lobby worked was reported in Riches (1986) who called for action to stop such sex education which aimed at exercising absolute social control:

" In this paper I have sought to expose some of the hidden connivances, implications, and activities of an interlocking power structure of which sex education is one... It is damaging because the sex education it seeks to promote (under whatever guise it may appear) is a vehicle to spread an amorality that is destructive of the family and of society... It is imperative that people of good will investigate and unravel the strands which have been cleverly woven round the policies, laws and institutions in their own countries. The instigators need to be identified and exposed, because they function with impunity, in secrecy or behind a screen of pseudo-respectability given when governments fund their activities and policies... The threat posed should command immediate response, energetic debate and the formation of counter-policies."

(Riches 1986).

Illustrative of the kind of sex education the early population-controllers promoted are the proposals of Jaffe (1969), and a paper by Berelson (1969). These demanded compulsory population/sex education for children in school, a sex education which treated a variety of sexual orientations as 'normal', free contraceptive facilities for all, including under-age children, etc. International organisations, such as I.P.P.F. have been cited as promoting such sex education (Riches 1986), and it has been argued that such aims are wholly inappropriate and provide sound reasons to resist its development. Goldman and Goldman (1982) expressed surprise at the continued opposition to sex education in Western society, given the present social conditions. This opposition was often channelled through local opposition groups (Bereday 1958; Fidge 1978; Goldman and Goldman 1982). It is claimed that current sex education is destroying the foundations of our society, and that a counter-attack is called for to defend that which is decent and right (Thwaites 1986).

Family Issues: Some opposition to sex education has been based on the claim that it intruded into family and church responsibilities (Drake 1968;

Honey 1978; Davies 1993). Some heads used their reluctance to usurp parents' responsibilities as a reason against school-based sex education (B.B.C. 1971). Whitehouse (1977) argued that sex education has been hijacked by a 'sex education industry', and this, as with secular commercialism, supported calls for its substantial modification and purification if it was to be acceptable for children. The Responsible Society (1982) produced advice to encourage home-based sex education:

" This booklet has been written to encourage parents to involve themselves in the sex education of their children. Ideally this is best carried out in the home where sexuality can be taught as an enrichment of the whole personality...." (R.S. 1982).

The booklet (R.S. 1982) gave very clear details of ways in which parents could effect pressure to modify and even prevent, sex education in schools (see also: Danon 1995). Alexander (1984) listed objections from the primary sector for using the societal analysis in developing curriculum strategies for sex education and other contentious issues:

- i. That the children are too young.
- ii. That the value issues are too formidable.
- iii. Because of the concept of the 'Cocoon Principle' (that is: don't upset the child since even adults find such matters hard).

Foreshadowing Alexander's (1984), 'Cocoon Principle' were fears for, and calls to preserve, children's 'innocence' (Newsom and Newsom 1968; Farrell 1978; Hakimzadeh 1987; Eickhoff 1988;) and not to disturb the young (Burke 1970). The concept of innocence has also been described as a natural defence mechanism or protective function devised to protect children from premature entry into the sexual phase of life with all its implications, responsibilities and temptations (Eickhoff 1992).

Bruinvels (1986) opposed sex education on the basis that it was a private

matter between parent and child and Riches (1986) argued that some current sex education material did nothing to mitigate the problems of child sexual abuse. The F.P.A. has been identified as a force to be resisted:

" The FPA's sex education activities are intrinsic to the central theme outlined earlier in this paper: a perfect example of Chisholmism. They sow confusion in the child's mind about the validity of the concept of 'right and wrong' and present only one moral absolute: the use of contraceptives 'every time you have sex'.... It is impossible to overestimate the the power of the FPA in influencing thinking, teaching and policy-making at every level of British society."

(Riches 1986).

McLeod and Davies (1992) said sex education destroys childhood innocence, denies parents their primary right to sex educate their own children, fails to recognise the latency period, is immodest and unchaste. As such, parents should seek to stop school-based sex education and undertake the education of their own children themselves, privately, as they see fit.

School Issues: Historically, sex education got off to a dismissive 'start'. In the Board's 'Suggestions For Teachers' (Board of Education 1905), the only mention of anything approaching sex education was in a passage on elementary science which simply read, 'Human Physiology - a subject unsuitable for detailed treatment in school'. The extreme wariness of the Minister, in a case referred to the Board of Education in 1914, and the parental opposition shown in this case (of teaching the physiological facts of reproduction by a woman teacher to girls of 11 - 13 RF), reflected emotional prejudice in reacting to such initiatives (Musgrave 1977). The Chief Medical Officer for the Board of Education, in 1919, called for discussion on the problem of 'sex hygiene' in the context of nature study. But in the 'Handbook of Suggestions' for both 1927 and 1937, it advised:

" anything in the way of ambitious instruction in physiology should be avoided."

.. (Board of Education 1927; 1937).

It was not until the mid to late 1960s that primary sex education began being considered. Opponents claimed the subject would be taught badly, inadequately, and wrongly, largely resulting from inadequately trained teachers (Johnson and Schutt 1966; Burke 1970). Current objections reflect many from the past; promoting immoral/amoral values, disrupts natural maturation encourages promiscuity, misinforms/ misrepresents and is fraudulent, encourages masturbation, ignores the latency period, etc. (Kirby et al 1979; Szasz 1981; Davies 1993; Anchell 1995; Hart 1995).

The uncertainties surrounding the variations in answers to the basic questions arising from the Three Ws (When ?, What ? and Who ?) were suggested as further reasons for opposition to sex education (Burke 1970). The suggestion that knowledge of sexual matters encouraged sexual activity was countered by Farrell (1978), while Gordon (1979) concluded that all opposition to sex education was based on the premise that 'knowledge is harmful'. Alexander (1984) reported that difficulties arising from different developmental stages of children in the same primary class formed the basis of objections to sex education in some primary schools. Other opposition was based on the idea that school was the wrong place:

" No classroom setting or informal discussion group can ever match this gradual personal acquisition of the facts of life (from parents at home RF). We talk about the importance of 'family communication', surely this means being able to find simple words to describe God's plan for procreation in answer to our children's simple questions."
(McLeod and Davies 1992).

An unusual, reason against school sex education came from Greer (1980):

" I've never wanted sex brought into schools because they would make it as boring as geography."
(Greer 1980).

This might have an element of lightheartedness about it, but it does reflect the kind of fundamental reason, which, while lacking educational substance, has the ring of authenticity. Similar reasons might be used by heads in opposition to sex education, beginning 'I never want sex education brought into school because...' Imaginary, but possibly the crux upon which the some heads' decisions are balanced.

The influence of right wing pressure in transferring sex education to school governors and away from local authorities was a move aimed at controlling the development of sex education and opposing the excessive 'leftish' ways in which it was said to be developing (Observer 1986). In this connection there were calls for lists of 'offensive' books to be proscribed, and teachers dismissed if they used them (Bruinvels 1986).

There are two factors, not prominent in the literature which I think will be influential, namely the personal opinions of some heads and the lack of official support. Other factors influencing heads' decisions against sex education will include the claim it is unnecessary, or the need for safeguards. All the factors considered in this section have the potential to influence the decisions made. Heads' decisions will depend on how they perceive these factors. The arguments for and against primary school sex education have various influences on heads' decisions, and within the factors such matters as; who should be responsible ?, the proposed aims and probable outcomes of sex education and at what age sex education should begin there are a variety of influences affecting both support of and opposition to, sex education.